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F. C. Whitehouse
from the Editor

Scarsdale July 14/75

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J. BRVEN

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THE
VERY SINGULAR LIFE
OF
JOHN BRUEN, ESQUIRE,
OF
BRUEN STAPLEFORD, CHESHIRE:

EXHIBITING A VARIETY OF MEMORABLE AND EXEMPLARY CIRCUMSTANCES,
WHICH MAY BE OF GREAT UTILITY TO ALL PERSONS; BUT PRINCIPALLY
INTENDED AS A PRECEDENT OF PIETY AND CHARITY
FOR THE INHABITANTS OF THE COUNTY OF CHESTER.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM HINDE,

Fellow of Queen's College, Oxford, and Preacher of God's Word at BUNBURY
in the aforesaid County. Originally published in 1641, by the Author's
Son, SAMUEL HINDE; revised, corrected, and republished, By WILLIAM
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PREFACE

TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

THOUGH so many years have passed away since the subject of this memoir went to his reward, yet the Editor found, on a late visit to Bruen Stapleford, and the Old Church at Tarvin, the Scripture verified, "that the righteous shall be had in remembrance."

Still the Bruen chancel, where he gathered his company around him, to sing the praises of God, and where he was buried, is pointed out; and the parish clerk utters his praises, imitating his ancient predecessor, who has left in Tarvin Church record the following quaint memorial:

"Burials 25 Jany 1625
John Bruen of Stapleford Esquire
Nulli pietate secundus
An Israelite in whom no guyle
Or fraud was ever found
A Phoenix rare
Whose virtues fair
Through all our coasts do sound."

Webb, in "King's Vale Royal," 1625, says, "This river now leads us by a fair and fruitful demesne, in the midst of a fine Lordship, taking name from a passage over the same water called Stapleford, having been for an ancient continuance the seat of gentlemen of great esteem in one well known name of the Bruines. The owner now, and long hath been, and long I would he might be John Bruine Esqre., who might, if he affected praise, receive from me some little remembrance."

Clarke, in his "Marrow of Ecclesiastical History," 1650, says of him, "He was one of the few individuals whose private virtues alone, in the rank of a country gentleman, have obtained a place in the annals of biography. His tenets were those of the Calvinistic Puritans, but his goodness of heart would have reflected honor on any rank and any religion."

We find also mention made of him in "Christopher Morton's Monument of the Fathers and Reformers."

Ormerod, in his "History of Cheshire," says that Tarvin was for a long time after John Bruen's death the seat of Puritanism, and that his son, Calvin Bruen, was brought into trouble on account of his attention to the famous Mr. Prynne, when conveyed through Chester to the castle of Caernarvon.

To the Puritan party several of John Bruen's children adhered.

His son Obadiah and daughter Mary appear among the New England pilgrims.

The former was entered a freeman of Plymouth Colony in 1640. Afterwards he went to Gloucester, the records of which place are for a time in his handwriting. There he records the birth of two of his children, Hannah and John, his only son. Before 1650, he was chosen seven times deputy to the General Court.

From Gloucester he removed to Pequot Harbor, (New London.)

"During the sixteen years in which he dwelt in this young plantation," says the author of Hist. New London, "he was perhaps more intimately identified with its public concerns than any other man. He was chosen a townsman for fifteen years in succession, and, except the first year, uniformly first townsman and moderator. He was usually on all committees for granting lands, building meeting-houses, and accommodating differences. He was Clerk or Recorder of the town all the time he was an inhabitant; and, in 1661, on the organization of the County Court, he was chosen Clerk of that body.

"In the charter of Connecticut granted by Charles II., his name appears as one of the patentees of the colony, and the only one from the town, which is proof that he was then considered its most prominent inhabitant. He appears to have been a perse-

vering, plodding, able and discreet man, who accomplished a large amount of business, was helpful to every body, and left everything which he undertook the better for his management." *

In 1667, as would appear by the deed of purchase of the Indians, to which his name with others is subscribed, he removed with his son, John Bruen, in company with an association of planters, to the vicinity of the Passaic River, where they founded what is now known as the city of Newark, first called Milford, after the place from which a portion of the planters had removed.

The book from which this present volume is reprinted, has been for many years in the Editor's family, and he has no knowledge of any other copy in this country.

To illustrate the character of our Puritan forefathers, and in the hope that it may excite some to follow in the footsteps of this "ancient father in godliness," it was thought well to accede to the wish of many, and reprint the memoir.

A. M. BRUEN.

JANUARY, 1857.

* History of New London, by F. M. Caulkins. See First Puritan Settlers, R. R. Hinman; East Jersey, W. A. Whitehead; and History of Cheshire, Ormerod, vol. ii., p. 172.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

IN order to obviate any objections that may be started against this edition of *Mr. Bruen's Life*, on the score of its not being *literally* copied from the Original, the Editor informs his readers that some of the Author's *deviations* from the course of the Narrative are abridged, and others entirely omitted; and this is done, not with a view of imposing upon the public, by vending a mere *catch-penny*, under a specious title—but in order at once to furnish them with a cheap and complete Portraiture of the venerable Mr. Bruen, and to do away the necessity of sometimes looking over a page or two of dry, uninteresting matter, to come at a few lines which treat upon *facts*.

The Publisher feels confident that a comparison, between this and the original Work, is sufficient to determine the public in favor of the present Edition; and that it may be made useful in promoting the best of causes, is the sincere wish of

The Public's humble servant,

THE EDITOR.

Chester, 1799.

THE ORIGINAL PUBLISHER

TO

THE READER.

THIS book is an orphan, having been long since left fatherless, and kept under hatches: but now, through His assistance in whom the fatherless find mercy, it is brought to light. It was a rule of Pythagoras, that his scholars be five years in school before they were permitted to speak: but this work has lain above twice five, before it could be suffered to speak in the language of the press.

In order that both the Author and his subject, like Demetrius' statues, may remain free from the soil of envy and detraction, I wish to give thee satisfaction concerning them.

1. As to the Subject: He was a man so renowned for piety, that the mouths of the most religious, prudent and learned men, in their times, have blessed him, and praised God for him. The famous Mr. Perkins, being dead, yet speaketh of him thus: "His house was none other than the house of God, and for religion, he carried the top-sail of all England." To this I add the testimony of the Right

Rev. Father in God, the Lord Primate of all Ireland, a man equally eminent for learning and piety: he said, speaking of Mr. Bruen, "In him was the very beauty of holiness; and he was of so amiable and cheerful a countenance, that when I beheld him, I was reminded of Moses, whose very face shone, as honoring some more than ordinary eminency of grace in his heart."

2. As to the Author: Nearness of relationship forbids me to say much here. I shall leave his own works to publish his abilities, and among many others the following. However, I dare be bold to affirm, it was not ostentation, or the thirst of popular applause, which induced him to enter upon this undertaking; but a desire to perpetuate the memory of a worthy gentleman, of whom he treats in such a manner as might make best for thy example and the Creator's glory.

Then, laying aside all prejudice, read the following tract; peruse it thoroughly, before thou censure it partially; and if any, beholding his deformities by means of this *glass*, should therefore break or blemish it, let him know the disadvantage is his own, not the Author's; and for one foul face he saw before, he will then discover twenty.

If the zeal of the Author, or his subject, outgo thy expectation or practice, blame them not; since, as there is no pointing at any man's person, so there is no conniving at any one's sins.

If, in the discountenancing and battering down of particular errors, either of judgment or practice, thou thinkest the narration mingled with too much bitter *hierapicra*—remember, sharp sauces best become the meat, and stimulate the appetite.

But if all this will not do—if Gallio like, thou carest for none of these things—yet be persuaded to remember the rule of our Saviour, *to do to others as thou wouldst they should do to thee*: deal not with the good names of the Author and his subject as Licurgus did with the coins of his country, or as Rehoboam did with his father's shields—which they found of beaten gold, but left of brass. Rather treat them as Augustus did the walls of Rome; which he found of brick, but left of marble. And whatsoever in them is virtuous, honest, just, lawful, laudable, and of good report, that follow; and while thy charity is thus shown towards them, the blessing of God be with thee.

So prays the Subject's Kinsman, the Author's Son, and thy Servant in Christ,

SAMUEL HINDE.

Prescott, May 20, 1641.

LIFE OF JOHN BRUEN, ESQ.

JOHN BRUEN, of Bruen Stapleford, in the county of Chester, Esq., was born in the year 1560, and was allied to many of the most ancient and worshipful families in the country. His father, a respectable gentleman, was descended from several worthy ancestors, the Lord having continued their race, and established that family, in their own name, place, house, and state, for many generations: a blessing, I acknowledge, of no extraordinary note — yet rather remarkable, because, even in these parts, not a few families, that have flourished in great pomp and pride for a season, and have thought their houses should be continued for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations, calling their lands by their names, have had their hopes and their lives cut off together, their posterity swept away as dung, and their names overwhelmed with the ruins of their habitations; their root being rottenness, and their blossom vanishing into dust, as the prophet speaketh.

The elder Mr. Bruen was first married to a sister

of Sir John Done, of the house of Utkinton, by whom he had no issue. She dying, he took to wife the daughter of Thomas Holford, of Holford, Esq., by whom he had fourteen children; so did the Lord entrust him with a large portion of *his own inheritance*.

Mr. John Bruen was the first-born of the male children, and heir of the family.

Several of his brethren and sisters were holy persons, but especially that rare gentlewoman, Mrs. Cath. Bretterg,* whose praise is in print, and whose fame has been sounded forth, and proclaimed to the churches of Christ, more than twenty years ago, by two silver trumpets† of the Gospel. Of her it

* This lady was studious of the Scriptures from her childhood. She married Mr. William Bretterg, when she was about twenty years of age, and died at the end of two years, leaving one child. When in her last illness, she took up the Bible, and, joyfully kissing it, said, "O Lord, it is good for me to be afflicted, that I may learn thy statutes: the law of thy mouth is better unto me than gold and silver." The day preceding that of her death, she lay with a cheerful countenance, whilst her husband read some portions of Scripture; and when he came to that passage, John xvii. 24, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am," &c., she said, "O! happy am I, that ever I was born to see this blessed day—praise, O praise the Lord for his mercies!" On the evening of May 31, 1601, her strength and speech beginning to fail, she said, "My warfare is accomplished, and mine iniquities are pardoned;" and immediately resigned her happy spirit into the hands of her heavenly Father. [See her Life.]

† Mr. Leigh and Mr. Harris.

might be truly said, among her sisters, "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all." So also may it be said of *him*, among his brethren, as is recorded of Jabez among his, because of his greater acquaintance with God: "Jabez was more honorable than his brethren, because he called on the God of Israel, and God granted him that which he requested."

It was not Mr. Bruen's double portion, the privilege of the first-born; nor his birth and blood, in being so respectably descended; nor his dignity, in being so honorably allied: it was not all or any of these things that he esteemed the ground of his praise and honor, or the staff of his comfort and rejoicing in the world: he was otherwise taught of God. "Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he knoweth me, saith the Lord."

It would be well if the rich and great, like this gentleman, would cease to admire themselves on account of worldly grandeur; and esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. For what is the flower of nature, without grace, but a stinking *weed* of a fair colour? What is nobility, without piety, but an *earthen pitcher*, covered with silver *dross*? What is he that is rich in the world, and not rich towards God, but a branded *fool*, even by God's own sentence, though he have goods laid up for many years, and say to his soul, as if he had spoken to a swine, "Soul, take thine

ease; eat, drink, and be merry?" And what is a gentleman, without the true faith of Christ in his heart, and the holy fruits thereof in his life, but a mere *gentleman*, an *alien* from the commonwealth of Israel, and a *stranger* from the covenants of promise, without hope, and without God?

Notwithstanding Mr. Bruen wanted Timothy's education, who was instructed in the Scriptures from his childhood; yet have I heard well of his parents' care in bringing him up, with the rest of their children, in an orderly, civil, and (as the times then were) religious manner; and the Lord preserved him, in his younger years, both from the poison of popish superstition, and the contagion of gross sins (which, for want of the light and life of the ministry of the Gospel, then reigned in those parts) as if he intended to reserve him as a vessel of honour for his own house, and so by little and little to fit him for the purpose. I do not say, that he was at that time altogether free from all savor and smell of popish lees and lies; or that his heart, in the heat of youth, had been entirely clear from youthful lusts; but that, to the glory of the grace of God, he was not settled upon any popish dregs, nor addicted to any of the common and cursed sins of the time.

When he was about seven years old, his father having rebuked and corrected him sharply for the commission of a fault, he, being in much grief on account of his parent's displeasure, and desiring to

find some means of comfort and relief, took up a little prayer-book, and went apart into his father's chapel; and there, in reading and praying, as well as he could, was comforted with inexpressible joys. This he himself related; and added, "But being a child, I knew not what those joys meant; the next day I went to the chapel again, and used the same means, but found not the like comfort."

What we ought to think concerning a child's prayer, and such inexpressible joys thereupon, I cannot well say; yet I remember what Austin says of himself when a child, viz., that, observing others pray to God, he learnt to conceive of him as some great and mighty One, who, though he was not known by sight, yet could both hear and help us at his pleasure: "For, being but a child," saith he, "I began to pray unto thee, my help and my refuge; and I prayed, with no little affection, that I might not be beaten at school." No doubt God doth sometimes cause the holy and heavenly fire of divine grace to break forth from the hearts and lips of children, in prayer to himself, when, through weakness of understanding and want of judgment, they neither knew whence it is, nor what is the meaning thereof. Samuel, when a child, ministered unto the Lord before Eli, though he knew him not, neither had had a revelation of his word; yea, he had communion with the Lord, as recorded 1 *Sam.* iii. 10. "Samuel! Samuel! then Samuel answered,

Speak; for thy servant heareth." I know we are not to look for such things now a days; yet, seeing the Lord is not bound, though he bind us to the use of his ordinary means, he may make sweet impressions of his Spirit and truth on the hearts of children, as I doubt not he did on the heart of Mr. Bruen, when he was grieved on account of having offended his father, patiently submitted to his severe correction, and had recourse to the Lord, by such means as were in his power, both for the pardon of his sin, and the comfort of his soul under that affliction; which I am the rather inclined to think was the case, because, being asked in his riper years as to the beginning of his calling and conversion, his usual answer was, "Even of a child little."

For want of a schoolmaster at home, Mr. Bruen was in his tender years sent to his uncle Dutton's, of Dutton, there to be trained up under James Roe; where he continued three years: and here he learnt something of grammar and a little civility, but received no nurture and information in true religion, his uncle's family being great, and of great liberty.

When he lived at this place, by means of musicians, and a chest of viols which was kept in the house, he was drawn by desire and delight into the dancing-school; where he profited so well in that kind of youthful activity, that he not only pleased himself therewith, but gave more delight to his parents than was meet.

The principal cause of his parents' error and his own vanity, touching these things, was, as himself acknowledgeth, the popish and profane state of the people of the country round them in those days: for "At that time," saith he, "the holy Sabbaths of the Lord were wholly spent, in all places about us, in May-games and May-poles, pipings and dancings; for it was a rare thing to hear of a preacher, or to have one sermon in a year—all living profanely in ignorance and error."

Our eyes, God be blessed, have seen better days, because of the day of grace; and our ears have heard of better things, by the Gospel of grace: and shall we, then, that are called to be the children of the light, remain in fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, as if we still loved darkness more than light? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to such sins, live yet therein?

In a common contagion, when the inhabitants of a place are in danger, men are wont to provide for their health by removal to a better air; if our vineyards are overgrown with brambles and briars, and we cannot get rid of them, we remove the best plants to a better soil: so did the Lord put it into the hearts of this gentleman's parents to deal with him; who transplanted him into the University of Oxford, that vineyard of the Lord, when about 17 years of age; where he probably first received the love of the truth with an understanding mind. He

was accompanied by his brother Thomas, and they were both maintained there, as Gentlemen Commoners, in Alban Hall, in an orderly and sufficient manner, for the space of two years.

It appears that he brought with him to Oxford some seeds and weeds of popish errors. He acknowledgeth, that, as St. Paul said of the men of Athens, he was then very superstitious—Augustine confesseth, he was a Manichee before he was a professor and preacher of the true religion; and Paul acknowledgeth he was a Pharisee before he was entrusted in Christ's service. Every man, indeed, by nature, is a Pharisee, and more or less a friend to popery; there being no religion so agreeable to carnal reason and fleshly wisdom, nor so pleasing to natural affection, as pharisaic devotion and hypocrisy, popish superstition and idolatry; which is not said with an intention to lessen Mr. Bruen's fault, or to draw a veil over the errors of his youth; but to magnify the grace of God, who found him going astray like a lost sheep, and was pleased to bring him back to the flock and fold of Christ.

The special instrument whereby the Lord did work was his own word, first sounded in his ear by one of his companions, a towardly young gentleman, and afterwards applied by the Spirit to his heart. The gentleman here alluded to was Mr. John Brerewood, the son of an alderman of the city of Chester; who, being well grounded in the

truth, and seeing Mr. Bruen infected with some popish errors, as the forbearing of meats and drinks for conscience sake, on Friday and other days, the forbidding of marriage to ministers, and divers other opinions of the like nature, being as willing to shew himself an enemy to his errors as a friend to his person, mounting God's great ordinance against the popish canons and constitutions, taking his shot and powder from the Scriptures, he fired from the altar and battered down the strong holds of Satan, laying level with the ground every papistical opinion that had exalted itself against the true knowledge of God, and so brought every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ; insomuch that the word of God was ever after better esteemed and entertained by him. The portion of Scripture which he principally urged was, 1 *Tim.* iv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, against the doctrine of forbidding meats and marriage.

The ordinary public means of conversion is, I confess, the ministry of reconciliation by the preaching of the Gospel; yet can it not be denied that God doth sometimes use private persons for enlightening, convincing or smiting the consciences of sinners, or drawing them from the fellowship of their old companions into the ordinances of God and the communion of his servants. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that winneth souls is wise," saith Solomon. Daniel also hath a saying

to the like purpose: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many unto righteousness, as the stars, for ever and ever." St. James speaks yet more plainly, chap. v. 19, 20. So was David drawn from his bloody rage by Abigail's wholesome counsel. So was Monica, Augustine's mother, reclaimed by her maid calling her *Meribibulam*.* So did Augustine, in a rhetoric lecture, convert Alipius, by a similitude taken from the vain games, wherein he immoderately delighted.

What proficiency Mr. Bruen made during his stay at the university, I cannot say, but I conjecture it could not have been much, as the time was short, the means for his aid but small, and the impediments many; especially these two, which are blocks in the way of many, and great ones two, dulling the edge of desire and delight in the studies of a college; namely, idleness and remissness at home, and ignorance of the true grounds of grammar, which they should be thoroughly acquainted with before they are sent thither. However, a scholar cannot be made out of every piece of timber, neither is every man's metal of gold, but some of silver, some of brass, &c. I will not say that the gentleman of whom we speak was of the best nature for making a scholar of, nor of the best disposition for great employments; but I am well assured, that

* A wine-bibber.

upon such a nature, and such learning as he had, the Lord was pleased to lay the foundation of a better building (begun in his youth, and reared up in his riper age) than all the gold and silver either of nature or art could otherwise have provided for him. It is the wisdom of our God, when he will furnish men with his graces, and employ them in his service, sometimes to pass by such as are noble by birth, comely in person, and excellent for natural and acquired abilities, and make choice of such as are of a middle or mean estate, of inferior parts and gifts, and who are very unlikely, in the eye of reason, to compass any great matters, or perform any good services for God or man: and this he doth, that all may know their sufficiency, and the efficacy and fruit of all their desires, to be of God; that he who worketh all may have the glory of all, both now and ever.

One egg is not more like another than this gentleman was to the admirable Galeacius Caracciolus, Marquis of Vico, in Italy, as the sequel of this story will show; who, being young, a mean scholar, and but lately entered into the school of Christ, was assailed by the Arians and Anabaptists in those parts, who endeavored to seduce him from the truth, and entangle him in their gross errors and blasphemous fancies. Notwithstanding many of his opponents were men of learning, yet, by the simplicity and plainness of the truth of God, and the

inspiration of the Holy Ghost, he not only discovered the folly of their heresies, but even untied their knots, brake their nets wherewith they would have held him, and mightily confuted them.

In the year 1579, Mr. Bruen left the university, and returned to the place of his nativity, his father being desirous of settling him in the marriage state. In the year following the daughter of Mr. Hardware, who had been twice Mayor of Chester, was recommended to the father, and by him proposed to his son: which proposal he entertained with reverence, well knowing that he was to him in God's stead, as to the disposal of him in matrimony. Accordingly, not long after, on the mutual love and assent of the parties, and the joint consent of the parents, they were married in the fear of God.

This was a pious entrance upon God's ordinance, the matter being so warrantable on all sides: for in this case the father doth not marry the son under years of discretion; nor doth the son, being of age to judge for himself, steal from his father, and, by wanton attempts, and rash and foolish contracts, prevent his father's choice, and bestow himself at his pleasure. This is worthy the observation and imitation of parents and children, in their matrimonial contracts, especially such as are higher in rank than ordinary. There are many gentlemen, and others too, so earthly-minded and covetous, that no sooner do their children peep out of the shell, but they be-

gin to plot and provide a match for them, little regarding where they set and sow, graft and plant.

It was far otherwise with the couple of whom we are speaking, who were united in the fear of God, and continued together with much comfort and content, he dwelling with her as a man of knowledge, and she with him as a faithful helper; and they had the blessedness of seeing their children as branches of the vine, or as olive plants round about their table, for the space of seventeen years.

In the early part of Mr. Bruen's matrimonial state, being in the prime of life (about the twenty-first year of his age), he was much addicted to the ordinary exercises and recreations of hunting and hawking, attending horse-races, and affecting the company of such gentlemen of note as took pleasure in these things; insomuch, that, joining with Ralph Done, Esq., grandfather to that worthy Knight, Sir John Done, late High Sheriff of the county of Chester, they kept between them fourteen couple of great-mouthed dogs, for the purpose of satisfying their humor and pleasure in the sports of the field.

I have not much to commend him for in these matters, but rather think him blame-worthy, for mispending his precious time in such carnal delights, and wasting his estate upon brutes, to serve his lust, which might have been much better bestowed on his own family, or the poor members of Jesus

Christ: for if we must give an account, at the day of judgment, of every idle word, how much more shall we be accountable for every idle *hour* and every idle *work*!—and if, when we have plenty of food, we are carefully to gather up the broken meat, that nothing be lost, how much more ought we to be careful that we be not guilty of so wicked and wilful waste as to give the children's bread unto dogs, when the cries of the poor cannot be heard for the yelling of these animals. That which Judas spake we may here repeat with propriety: "What need of all this waste?"

"But what is meant by all this?" some may inquire; "will you condemn all hunting, &c., as sinful and unlawful?" I will tell you my opinion respecting the question in a few words. Amongst the creatures of God, since the fall of man, there are some profitable and some noisome; and very many of both kinds are at enmity amongst themselves. There are not any of those which are serviceable to man, but what groan under bondage. This was not so from the beginning. Had it not been for the sin of our first parents, there would not have been any strife or variance in the brute creation: the wolf would have dwelt with the lamb, and the leopard have lain down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child might have led them. From this we may conclude, that, if the eagle fly after her prey,

the hound pursue the hare, and the hawk seize the partridge in consequence of our sin, these things cannot properly be delighted in. I therefore think it unlawful to take pleasure in the pain and torture inflicted by one brute upon another. God hath given us liberty to take the lives of some of his creatures, and the labor of others, for our use; and hath allowed us means, both natural and artificial, to bring them to our hands; so may we use, with discretion and moderation, the swiftness of the greyhound to course the hare, the sight and flight of the hawk to take the partridge, the scent and sagacity of the hound to hunt the deer, the nimbleness and subtlety of the tumbler to catch the coney; yet we are by no means to delight ourselves in the enmity of the creatures, as I once observed a gentleman do, who, being about to feed a hawk, took a live pigeon by the wings, and with great violence rent them from the body, and then plucked away the legs also, the body of the poor creature trembling in his hand, while the hawk devoured the limbs, to the gentleman's great satisfaction.

"A good man is merciful to his beast," saith Solomon; giving him a due allowance of pasture, fodder, and provender, moderating his labor, and withholding his hand from cruelly beating, spurring, whipping and scourging him. The groans of the horses used in hunting, racing, &c., should soften the hearts of their foolish masters. If our *enemy's*

ass lie under his burden, we are in duty bound to relieve him: How much less ought we to lay intolerable burdens upon our own beasts! O that we could learn to be merciful as He is whose tender mercies are over all his works!—and that horse-racers, rank-riders, and hot-spur hunters, would moderate their pursuits after pleasure, in imitation of the following example!

Mr. Bruen having spent some years of his life in vain delights, as above related, lest he should trifle away his time in carnal pleasures any longer, the Lord awoke him to a sense of his error, and began to prepare him for better employment.

In the year 1587 it pleased God to call for his worthy father; on which occasion, he, being much perplexed, both in mind and estate, sorrow, fear and care began to work within him; and the Lord embraced this opportunity for his effectual calling and reformation. This he did by the rebukes of his word and checks of his Spirit, convincing his judgment, and changing his mind from the love of base things to a delight in those which are far better. Now he began to search his heart and try his ways; and, calling himself to account for his former courses, what he had felt in the pleasures of life he measured by the line of the word, and weighed it in the balances of the sanctuary; and, behold, it all proved vanity of vanities, and vexation of spirit.

Although the pangs of his conversion, and the

pains of his new birth, were not so violent as those felt by Paul, Constantine, or Luther; yet his experience herein was not much unlike that of the pious Austin, at the time of *his* conversion; who, being weary of the ways of vanity, and grievously tired with the weight of his sins, in a holy desire to cast off the burden that pressed him down, and to shake off the pleasing snares that entangled him, poured out his very heart in prayers and tears before the Lord, thus: "How long, Lord, wilt thou be angry? for ever? Be not mindful of my old sins. How long? how long? To-morrow! and to-morrow! Why not to-day? why is there not this hour an end of my former filthiness?" Oh happy Austin!—who wast thus humbled, that thou mightest be exalted.*

I will not compare Mr. Bruen with St. Austin, as to the measure of grace he possessed; but with respect to the manner, means, time, and truth of his conversion, they may well go hand in hand.

Austin was about thirty-two years of age when effectually converted; so was he. Austin had at that time many combats between carnal reason and religion, the flesh and the Spirit; and so had he. Austin had his heart full of prayers, and his eyes

*....Wisdom smiles when humbled mortals weep,
When sorrow wounds the breast, as ploughs the glebe,
And hearts obdurate feel her soft'ning shower :
Her seed celestial, then, glad Wisdom sows.

full of tears, when he sought the Lord; and so had he. Austin held communion with God by colloquies, soliloquies, holy and heavenly meditations; so did he. Austin, having once tasted the sweetness of the Lord, thought nothing so pleasant as to forego his former vain delights, and esteemed it a happiness to renounce those joys and toys which before he was afraid of losing; such was Mr. Bruen's experience, when he had drunk more freely than heretofore of the streams which flow from the River that maketh glad the city of God. Austin's conversion was very soon made a blessing to several of his friends, viz: Alipius, Nebridius, and Evodius, who were likewise turned from darkness to light; so was this gentleman's conversion attended with the like unspeakable blessing on several of his friends, viz: brothers, sisters, and neighbors. Austin, after his conversion, sought and served the Lord with great power and zeal, striving for the truth of the Gospel; so did he, according to his situation, and the gifts and graces he possessed; and though in this respect he was much inferior to Austin, yet was he superior to many of his rank.—The truth of these particulars will be seen in the sequel.

Some of the first, though not the fairest fruits of his change, appeared when he fell heir to his father's estate. He began to cast out all impediments which might hinder, and to embrace all helps that might

further him in running the race which the Lord had set before him. The thoughts of two matters in particular perplexed him, which were : 1. How he might, with small beginnings, provide for his family ; and, 2. How he should discharge the trust reposed in him by his father, of paying the portions of twelve children out of the produce of the lands.

In order to accomplish these things, he wisely and conscientiously laid aside hawks and hounds, and for ever cast off his wide-mouthed dogs ; and further, having a goodly park at the back of his house, well stored with fallow deer, he immediately killed the game, and disparked the land, drawing himself to a narrow compass, living frugally and contentedly, and yet very competently ; by which means he provided sufficiently for his family, and faithfully discharged the trust reposed in him, paying his brethren and sisters their respective portions.

After the Lord had mercifully revealed himself in his Son Christ unto him, causing the light of his countenance to shine upon his heart, he could not rest till he had, with Obed-edom, brought the ark of God into his house ; and this he did with much comfort and rejoicing, raising an altar for the worship of God in his family, and so making it a little Bethel, a house of God, a pledge of his presence, and a place for his service. Though none of the neighbouring gentlemen would join him, yet did he resolve with

Joshua, "I and my house will serve the Lord." With holy David, he "walked wisely in the midst of his house," favouring the godly, but "not suffering a wicked person to abide in his sight."

To be more particular: His principal care was for his wife and children; that he might dwell with *her* as a man of knowledge, and bring up *them* in the nurture and information of the Lord; and though he had some crosses, yet he had much comfort in their well-doing.

Mrs. Bruen was well affected towards religion before, and much exercised in the duties thereof; but now, by the instrumentality of her husband, she was brought to a higher degree of knowledge and grace, and became a helper in the best things, drawing with him in the yoke of Christ, as a true Christian, both as to doing and suffering the will of their heavenly Father.

A good example this for husbands!—he not only provides for his spouse temporal comforts and conveniencies, but also those which are far more excellent. It is also worthy the imitation of such women as would be found among the number of good wives, tractable to observe and obey their husbands, *in the Lord*.

How miserable is the condition of those families whose governors are unequally yoked, differing both in opinion and affection touching religion, the husband drawing one way, and the wife another!

—Suppose the husband an Atheist, who calls not upon God, returns no thanks at his table, nor reads the sacred Scriptures ; the wife a blind Papist, contenting herself with her beads and books in a private chamber, so feeding and cherishing her seduced heart and corrupted humour. Suppose the husband a profane Esau, minding only earthly things ; the wife a godly matron, with Martha's care and Mary's choice. Suppose one of the parties thinks very little too much in the service of God ; the other, that all which can be done, in religious duties of the family, is very insufficient for testifying his or her love to Almighty God. Or suppose the husband contents himself with a form of godliness, putting a shag-haired serving-man to read a few cold prayers, and a simple and silly child to say grace, so slubbering over the morning and evening service with as much content as though he had in his house Micah's levite, or one of Jeroboam's priests, to assist in worshipping the *calf* which is set up in the family ; while the wife is very much censured, for rejecting pharisaic formality, and desiring such a powerful and effectual means of grace as may be instrumental in causing the whole household to show forth the power and fruit of godliness in a good conversation.—Alas ! what distractions and contentions must needs be here !—what disorders in the government of such families ! The husband and wife, although yoke-fellows, are yet unequally

yoked ; one draws forward, the other pulls backward ; one puts his shoulder to the burden, the other withdraws, or stands in an open opposition to the bearing of it ; or it may be one goes in the broad way presumptuously, while the other travels even in the same road *devotionally*.

The case was very different with Mr. Bruen's family ; the governors whereof, being of one mind and heart in the profession and practice of vital godliness, were as lamps, shining forth in holy example.

They instructed their children in the principles of religion by catechizing, and afterwards built them up with such portions of Scripture as best suited their ages, and might most easily make impressions of grace and truth on their hearts ; and, as a good father, who knew that sparing the rod might spoil the child, Mr. Bruen seconded his instructions with occasional corrections.

If at any time his heart were so over-heated, by hatred of their sin, and zeal for the glory of God, as to speak unadvisedly, or deal too violently with his hands, he was afterwards greatly troubled and humbled in his mind, to think that, in going about to heal the souls of others, he had wounded his own ; for which he could find no better a remedy than to have recourse to his heavenly Father by hearty prayer. As fruits of his holy desires and endeavours touching this

matter, he learnt to be more watchful over his spirit and tongue on such occasions; grew more moderate in administering correction, keeping within the bounds of prudence and compassion; and when his passions were very vehement against sin, he greatly asswaged the heat thereof by his love and pity for the sinner. He lived to see those whom he chastised effectually converted and reformed.

Having treated of the branches of his vine, I now come to the plants of his vine-yard, namely, his servants; among whom there was not one idle or unprofitable person.

His choice and ordering of them are worthy commendation. When he heard of any who began to set their faces towards Jerusalem, or who had travelled many Sabbath-day journies thitherwards already, his heart was presently towards them; and if he was in want of servants, he endeavoured by fair means to draw such into his employ, in preference to persons of any other description whatsoever; so that in a short time he was so well provided with honest, faithful, and godly servants, both men and women, that, like Philemon, he had a church in his own house.

A goodly family!—where parents and children, governors and servants, are all either devoted to God, or submissive to the duties of religion!

Those of his servants who were most pious, he reckoned most faithful to himself; and such he

esteemed as his fellow-servants under Jesus Christ. He sometimes made them his familiar companions, counselling, conferring, consulting, and determining with them, in matters of conscience, and other important concerns ; and used them as his comforters in affliction and temptation.

Among the rest, he had one servant of special note, an old disciple, like Mnason, who was considered as the father of his domestics. His name was Robert Pasfield ; but he was better known by the appellation *Old Robert*.

This man was utterly unlearned, being unable to read a sentence, or to write a syllable ; yet was he so well taught of God, that by the Almighty's blessing on his own industry, he grew in grace as he did in years, and became ripe in understanding and mighty in the Scriptures. He was so well acquainted with the history of the Bible, and the contents of every chapter thereof, that with very little ado he would almost always tell an inquirer in what book and chapter any particular sentence was to be found ; insomuch that he was a very profitable index to the family, in reminding them of what they had heard, but lost by slip of memory : he was also a godly instructor and teacher of young professors, acquainting them with the word, and exercising their hearts unto godliness by the precepts and examples contained therein ; which he frequently did, both at home and abroad, as opportunity served.

Now if that which I have heard be true, that a good text-man is a good divine, Old Robert was one, in our country proceedings. He had a good gift in prayer, was very willing as well as able to confer upon good things, careful to hear the word preached, and apt to refresh his own and others' memories, by repetitions, and other means; one of which was a curious girdle, that he had contrived for the purpose.

Old Robert's girdle being of a singular construction, we shall give a particular description of it. It was of leather, and long enough to encircle his body twice: he divided it into several portions, as a carpenter's rule, allotting each book of the Bible to one of those divisions; as, Genesis to the first, Exodus to the second, &c.—for distinguishing the chapters of each book he annexed long points or thongs to the respective divisions, on which he made knots for the chapters; and he had other points or rushes, to divide these again into their particular contents, or verses, as occasion required.

This girdle he made use of for the same purpose as some do their pen: which he did with so good an effect, in observing the points of Scripture alledged in any sermon, and binding them up in this extraordinary contrivance, that in handling the same afterwards, and repeating what he had heard, he received great benefit himself, and administered much comfort to others.

Such was Mr. Bruen's opinion of Old Robert's girdle, that he reserved it in his study, as a monument of God's mercy, and his faithful old servant's piety and industry.

This man and his girdle will rise up in judgment against many who have greater opportunities to know the will of God, and to do it; but yet are unmindful of the things which make for their peace, and retain not in their memories, nor treasure up in their hearts, the blessed truths which are set forth in the preaching of the everlasting Gospel.

Old Robert, though a mean servant, was highly esteemed by his worthy master; who would often be in his company, frequently visiting him at the hop-yard or threshing-floor, in order that they might confer together, and that Mr. Bruen might take a part in his labour.

Such is the nature of genuine humility and sincerity, that the master does not consider himself a whit abased by stooping to the condition of his servant; nor is the servant a jot prouder, or more presuming, for his master's kind dealing with him.

Mr. Bruen was very unlike too many, who think they should lose much of their greatness, if they were to speak kindly to, or talk familiarly with their godly servants; through which they are less able to do good to others, and deprive themselves of the opportunity of receiving benefit from those who are desirous of rendering them essential

service.—It may not be amiss to remark, that there was none of this stately stiffness between Abraham and Eliezer, Moses and Joshua, Eli and Samuel, Paul and his followers, Christ and his apostles: no; these served one another in love, seeking each other's succour.

When nearly eighty years of age, having spent about thirty of them in Mr. Bruen's service, Old Robert became unfit for country labour; when his good master did not cast him off, as some would have done, like a worn-out dog, but nourished and cherished him with some of the best morsels from his own table, by his own hand, for many years; permitting him to sit in the parlour, or in the buttery not far from him, that even at meal-time they might converse together. And thus he dealt with him, in great love and compassion, till the day of his death.

But leaving Old Robert in rest and bliss with God, we proceed to say something further concerning his master; who, notwithstanding his great regard for this ancient professor, yet did he wisely proportion his respect for the rest of his servants, to their content and his own comfort. Some of the most devout he made choice of to attend him, both at home and abroad. These were more happy than the others, as he was ever ready to impart to them wholesome admonitions and instruction, or to converse with them upon religious subjects, whilst they

served at table, or journeyed with him on the road. He thought his table never better furnished than when he had gracious and godly persons to sit with and stand near him; nor his meat better seasoned, than when it was salted with such wholesome words as might minister grace to the hearers.

How different from this is the conduct of those whose heads are so shallow, that they cannot speak of divine things; their hearts so empty of grace and goodness, that they can have no quiet in their minds, if a good man be in their company; and their judgment so beclouded, as to imagine they cannot be cheerful if God be retained in their thoughts!*

He was not forgetful concerning those of his servants who were employed in husbandry, &c., proportioning their labor to their strength, their wages to their labor, and always allowing them time to accomplish the work they took in hand; he likewise gave them such encouragement as might tend to make them cheerful both in his own and God's service.

In his visiting of them, which was frequent, he

* Reader! is this applicable to THEE?—if so, be assured that thou art yet “in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity.” Remember, the children of the Most High are in the possession of that

Which nothing earthly gives,
Or can destroy,
The soul's calm SUNSHINE, and
The HEARTFELT JOY.

sometimes took occasion to speak to them from the nature of their callings, work, and wages ; sometimes from the creatures of God, their nature, end, and use ; and sometimes from the seasons of the year—the spring, seed-time, summer, harvest, winter, fair or foul weather, and the like ; when he would refer to those parts of Scripture which treated of these things, for their further instruction and edification.

If their work was well done, he would commend them ; if the contrary, he would admonish or reprove them accordingly ; yet not with reviling words, as ever I could hear ; but in such a manner as became a holy man and a good master.

His servants usually exercised themselves in godliness by mutual exhortations and admonitions, praying together in their courses, in the evening, for a blessing on their desires and labours ; which they generally performed in the kitchen, after family prayer in the parlor.

The master thus governing religiously, and the servants thus obeying conscientiously, Mr. Bruen's house became a common nursery for the churches of God. Such of his servants as were inclinable to marriage he provided well for, and sent them out in the fear of God, to establish divine worship in their own houses ; and some who continued unmarried he bestowed on other families, or suffered them to transplant themselves into those houses where they might join others of God's

servants in spreading abroad religion, and so enlarging the kingdom of Jesus Christ; and he supplied the places of these by taking such others into his family as were fittest for being planted or watered in that part of the Lord's vineyard.

Having shown how he ordered his family, as to the discharge of religious duties, we are further to observe his course and carriage in those exercises of religion which he every morning and evening performed with them, to their mutual comfort and the glory of God. He well knew that family duties were as goads and spurs in the sides of godliness; like coals taken from the altar, whereby iniquity is purged, and the hearts of men are inflamed with holy affection towards God and good things; or like the buckling on of the whole armour of God, that so being furnished with offensive and defensive weapons, the Christian soldier may stand in the evil day, and go through the duties of life with comfort and satisfaction.

From these and the like serious considerations, he exercised himself and his family in the following manner:

Rising early in the morning (between three and four in the summer, and about five in the winter) he devoted an hour or two to private prayer, praise, and meditation, before he rang the bell to awake the rest of the family; en-

deavouring so to set the *watch* in the morning, that it might go well all the day; he likewise usually embraced these opportunities to write fair some part of such sermons as in a running hand he had taken from the mouth of the preacher, for renewing and increasing the benefit and comfort he had already received by the same.

When the family were come together, on the ring of the bell, they all very reverently composed themselves to stand in the presence of Almighty God; and then, lifting up his heart with his hands to God in the heavens, he began thus :

Blessed Lord God, and our most merciful Father in Christ Jesus, we thy poor children do humbly beseech thee graciously to assist us by thy Holy Spirit in this our morning exercise, that we may faithfully perform the same, to thy praise and our comfort; and that for Christ his sake, our only Saviour and Redeemer. AMEN.

This short prayer I do the more willingly insert, that they may see their error, who hold him to have been an enemy to all set forms of prayer; which mistake of theirs may be more clearly seen, by observing his ordinary practice on the Lord's day in the public assembly, where he with reverence accommodated himself to the prayers of the church.

For my part, I shall never blame a man for seeking to help his understanding, memory, and affections, by forms; but if he rest in his book-prayers,

and never strive to speak to God out of his own heart, by the Holy Ghost, which teacheth to say, "Abba, Father," he is not much unlike one impotent and weak, who, though he have means of recovery tendered him, would rather use a pair of crutches, borrowed of his neighbour, than betake himself to his own legs and feet.

To proceed: After this prayer, he called on the family to sing such of the psalms as he pointed out, with grace in their hearts, to the Lord; which they performed with such melodious voices and sweet affections (himself beginning the tune) as if they wished to sound forth the praises of God, not with David's harp merely, but with David's heart also. With this exercise he was much delighted; and not unfrequently his spirit was so ravished therein, that his heart would leap within his body, as John Baptist did in his mother's womb: yea, he was so greatly affected in the act of praising God, that he chose the word *Hallelujah* for his poesy, and usually wrote it in the first leaf of all his books.

When the psalm was ended, he read a chapter in the Bible, keeping a regular course in his reading, to make his family acquainted with the order and matter of the Scriptures, and to season their hearts with some portion of God's word in the morning, as a preservative against all unsavory thoughts, noisome lusts, rotten speeches, and ungodly works, during the day.

And now, because he knew all planting and watering were in vain, unless God gave the blessing of increase, and that the prayer of faith availeth much to that end, he and his family, bowing the knees of their hearts as well as those of their bodies, before the throne of grace, commended themselves to God in humble and hearty prayer, making their requests known to him in all manner of supplications, with thanksgivings; which Mr. Bruen usually performed with such power and feeling, fervency and sincerity, faith and humility (as the Spirit of grace gave him understanding and utterance, and as their several necessities required), that he was often much admired of those who heard him; and by his holy petitions and gracious affections, he greatly refreshed the hearts and cheered the spirits of his friends and neighbours who joined with him. He would so wrestle with God, by prayers and tears, Jacob like, as to prevail with his heavenly Friend for the blessings he wanted. The fruits of these his holy desires and endeavours were so remarkable in his own family, that, whether he prayed against sins or sorrows, or sought unto God for grace and good things, seldom did they meet again to worship, but they had some fresh cause of praise and thanksgiving to Him who is far more ready to hear than mortals are to pray. He not only wisely considered what to ask in prayer, but carefully observed how he sped afterwards; like David, he made his requests known,

and then patiently waited, to see what success he should have ; being thereby enabled to approach the Divine Being with renewed vigour the next opportunity.

Thus did Mr. Bruen ordinarily exercise himself and his family every morning ; and after their evening repast he called them to the like service and sacrifice, which was performed much in the same manner, saving that he then took more pains with them, having more liberty and a better opportunity ; for in the evening he generally instructed his family from a portion which he took in the chapter then read, propounding and applying some wholesome doctrine ; it being his delight to edify his family in faith and love, and to train them up in the knowledge and fear of God, so acquainting them with their duties towards him and their fellow-creatures, that, living soberly, righteously, and godly, in the world, they might beautify their profession, and adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

These his godly pains and practices, as a pastor in his house, were greatly maligned, reproached, opposed, and questioned, not only by the vulgar sort, but even by some of our *masters in Israel* ; whose negligence was reprov'd by his diligence, their profaneness checked by his holiness, the government of their families obscured and blemished by the beautiful order observed in his, which was as far advanced above some of theirs, as Bethel was above

Bethaven, Sion above Shilo, or the temple of God above the temple of idols.

When he observed, and wisely considered, the malignity and enmity of worldly persons against godly duties, in order to justify his course, and stop the mouths of these gainsayers, he fortified himself, both as to judgment and practice, by painfully collecting observations on the Scriptures, together with the expositions, testimonies and examples of good men, who were witnesses to the truth of God, and favourable to the doctrines of our Church.

I have read what he thus collected, in his own hand-writing, which I not only approve of, but like well; the publishing of which, however, in the body of this work, would not be altogether pertinent.

The Lord having warmed the heart and house of Mr. Bruen with the love of the truth, there arose out of this heat such a flame of holy zeal against lying vanities, and for promoting the true worship and glory of God, that, finding in his own chapel, being a part of Tarvin church, many superstitious images, and idolatrous pictures painted on the windows, insomuch that scarce the breadth of a groat of white glass could be seen, he warrantably and peaceably took down the same, and reglazed the windows with white and bright glass, at his own cost; well knowing, that these painted puppets and dumb images obscured the

light of the Gospel, as well as darkened the church, however they might be considered by some as Laymen's books. Being encouraged herein, not only by the word of God, but by the injunctions of the Queen (Elizabeth) and by a commission sent down to the Earl of Derby, the then Mayor of Chester, he proceeded from the chapel to the rest of the church, and defaced every image which he deemed dangerous or offensive in any part thereof.

He felt such enlargement of heart towards God and his people, that he was not only careful to abolish all provocations to idolatry and false worship, but it was the very joy of his soul to bring into the public assembly (which he did almost every Lord's day) such godly and able ministers as fed the people with knowledge and understanding, such as sowed the seeds of grace and truth among them; ambassadors of peace, who preached to sinners the glad tidings of the Gospel by the word of reconciliation, beseeching them, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God; heralds at arms, lifting up their voices as trumpets, to tell the house of Israel their transgression, and the house of Judah their sins, and declaring God's righteous judgments against the same. This he likewise did at his own cost, with a cheerful and glad heart, honouring God with his substance, in thus maintaining the Lord's harvest-men.

In these his noble proceedings Mr Bruen was un-

daunted, though his care, cost, and labour of love, were slighted by many, little regarded by the vulgar, greatly opposed by the popish and profane, and too much undervalued by all ; neither mocks, threats, nor slanders, could divert him from his way, nor cause the work of the Lord to cease in his hands ; so the word of God grew mightily and prevailed ; and, to use his own words, “ Religion began to enter, maugre the devil and his partakers ; for I was much opposed.”

Reader, contrast the example of this great man with those of too many gentlemen of the present day. He compassionately and liberally provided spiritual food for a thoughtless multitude, who were willingly wandering in the wilderness of sin, as sheep without a shepherd ; he rejoiced exceedingly to forward the work of the Lord, and went on in his ways with courage, constancy, and uprightness ; while others, rich in worldly goods, are yet poor, very poor, in good works ; and would rather lay out a hundred pounds in decorating their own houses, than bestow so many pence towards building the walls of Jerusalem. He herein differed very much from many, that are entrusted with lands and livings, for maintaining the ministry, and so providing spiritual things for the people ; but who, on the contrary, turn their patronage into pillage, and their devotion into sacrilege, cutting short the minister of his due, and the people of their *food*.

About the year, 1590, Mr. Bruen provided the public congregation with a worthy preacher, who, though he appeared to be much admired by them for his gifts, was hardly thanked for his pains; inso-much that the minister grew unwilling to bestow his labours among them any longer; on which Mr. Bruen in policy withdrew him to his own house, in order to make them more sensible of his value. He on this occasion erected a pulpit in a chapel which he had at his house, and for a season maintained the preacher there.

This no doubt was much to his cost as well as to his comfort; for, though some would come to the chapel with good minds, to have their souls fed with the bread of life; yet others would be as ready to press into the hall, to fill their bellies.

But he could not long confine the word to his own family; common necessity, and the importunity of some Christian friends, prevailed on him to give up the preacher to the public assembly again: however, he both maintained him, and others his successors, till the death of the incumbent; when God established a faithful preacher among them.

The minister first above mentioned being invited to a wedding at the Peile, he preached in the parlour there, and was greatly admired of his hearers. "Then it was objected against me," says Mr. Bruen, "that I had committed a great sin, in keeping such a worthy preacher from the great congregation: to

which I answered, that none requested it, nor gave him thanks when I brought him; therefore he was unwilling to come amongst them. But I was glad to bring the word of God again unto them; and it has continued till now that God hath planted Mr. Clark amongst us."

It may not be impertinent here to produce the testimony of the Rev. Mr. Clark in favor of Mr. Bruen: says he, "Mr. Bruen was the chief instrument in planting and establishing the Gospel in this congregation: first, by providing divers of God's ministers to preach here often, when the incumbent was grown old and decrepid; afterwards by maintaining a preacher at his own cost; and, lastly, by being the means of obtaining the place for me in reversion, allowing me the greatest part of my maintenance. So that this parish hath cause for ever to acknowledge him a nursing father of religion amongst them, and a blessed instrument in bringing in the light of the Gospel, when the people sat in darkness and the shadow of death."

Being much stirred in his spirit against the vain amusements called *wakes*, and *vigils*, practised and kept in honor of certain popish saints, with riot and excess in eating and drinking, dancing, gaming, &c., Mr. Bruen, in order to put a stop to such vanities, in Tarvin, set up the *ark of God*, with great pomp and power, when the people were engaged in these matters; whereby their *Dagon* was finally brake into

pieces. "Against St. Andrew's day," saith he, " (which is the time of Tarvin wake) and the week following, I observed, for several years together, to invite two or three of the best affected preachers in the diocese, who spent the greatest part of three days in preaching and praying in the church ; insomuch that the pipers and fiddlers, bear-wards, players, and gamesters, had no time left for their vanities, but went away with great fretting ; and yet multitudes of well affected people filled the town and church, and that with much rejoicing, blessed be God."*

At these times he had a beef and a half made use of in his house, in refreshing the bodies of religious persons.—So great was his love to God and his saints that, in comparison therewith, all other things were esteemed as loss, and dross, and dung.—How truly might he say, with David, " Away from me, all ye workers of iniquity ; I will keep the commandments of my God. I hate all vain inventions ; but thy law do I love. All my delight is in the saints, and in such as excel in virtue. I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go up into the house of the Lord ; our feet shall stand in thy gates, O Jerusalem !"

As to Tarvin wake, Mr. Bruen imitated the example of our Lord, who at the feast of the dedication took occasion to preach the Gospel of the kingdom

* It is remarkable, that there has not been a wake held at Tarvin, from the time here alluded to, to the present period ; 1799.

to such as were collected together to revel in carnal delights.

I mention these things, both for the commendation of this worthy gentleman, and for the provocation of other persons of rank to do all they can to suppress wakes, and other festivals of this kind, the celebration of which is so far from having the warrant of God's word, that, on the contrary, they are themselves the bastard brood of the man of sin. Without doubt, such service, in commemoration of departed saints, is no other than idolatry, hateful to God, and hurtful to men. Indeed, the names of some *saints* have been inserted in popish calendars for celebration, who either never had any existence at all, as St. Christopher, St. George, St. Catharine, &c., or who would have fared better had they never had any, as Boniface the idol saint of Banbury, or Dominic the bloody persecutor of the flock of Christ; or such as were not much better for their conversation than beasts, as Medardus, and Lubinus, who are adored as saints in these festivals and wakes, though 'tis to be feared their souls are frying in hell.

Having thus planted and watered his own family, and so well provided for the public assembly, Mr. Bruen was greatly admired for his sincerity as well as for his fervency in the profession of religion. His name, being perfumed with a great variety of graces, sent forth a most fragrant smell and savour into all the families of the country round about;

so that several gentlemen of rank became desirous of sojourning under his roof, for their better information in the way of God, and the more effectual reclaiming of themselves and their families.

That worthy Knight, Sir Richard Grosvenor, Bart., when young, was by his parents placed in this family; in which he abode three years, and was trained and nurtured in the knowledge and fear of God.—The seeds then sown in his heart are now bringing forth fruit, both in his person and calling; of which we have seen a fair increase already.

About the same time also came Mr. Hardware, of the Peile, with all his family, and dwelt under this blessed roof.

At first he could not bear wholesome reproof (in which Mr. Bruen was very full and free) any more than sore eyes can endure the sun; which this faithful servant of the Lord observing, and knowing that the patient must be very sick who is impatient of the means which might effect his cure, he cast about how he might deal with him so as to be of use: how he succeeded herein, let his own words declare:

“ I remember my brother Hardware, when he was a tabler with us, at first would not be reproved; but after a while, having the 141st Psalm for our evening exercise, divers of our family, who usually gave notes on the Scripture, concluded that each should speak of the 5th verse, ‘ Let the righteous

reprove me,' &c. I spoke last. After this time he never resisted any more."

He afterwards gave a better testimony concerning Mr. Hardware and his family, under his own hand ;

"It pleased God," saith he, "so to work upon his and their minds, that they went home with new hearts, converted to God, and professed religion in holy sincerity till their death. My brother, the first evening he came home to the Peile, set up religion in his family with great power and comfort ; singing psalms, reading the Scriptures, praying, and catechizing ; which being ended, his wife ran to him and kissed him, saying, ' O husband ! I thank God, and bless his name, that ever you came to Stapleford !' Afterwards being Mayor of Chester, he that year shewed his religion very graciously in his government. All praise to God."

Thus he took into his house some out of other families, that were as rough stones from a quarry ; whom he, by God's blessing, squared, smoothed, and polished, for the building of the Lord's temple.

Mr. Bruen was not only studious to improve himself and others in religion at home ; but he was wont to frequent certain religious assemblies, both in Cheshire and Lancashire, which were held monthly for holy exercises ; on which occasions he sometimes had to take long and sore journies, with much toil and cost, that he might be present where he knew *manna* would be rained down from Heaven, where

he might glean after the Lord's reapers, and where he might buy gold and white raiment, wine and milk, without money, and without price.

At these times he usually took down in writing the substance of such notes, observations, and sermons, as he heard; which he would repeat to such religious persons as accompanied him in his journies, for their spiritual refreshment. These things, when come home, he wrote out fairly, for the use of himself, his friends, and posterity.*

He continued the practice of writing and copying what he heard of sermons, lectures, &c. about thirty-six years, leaving behind him an incredible number of manuscript volumes, which he carefully commended to the heirs of his body, requesting that the same might be read by them at least once in their lives respectively.

His kindness to God's ministers, at the above meetings, was wonderful; rejoicing with them, often defraying their charges, encouraging, comforting, counselling, admonishing, gently reproving, and sometimes inviting them to his house.

How well would it be if gentlemen, and others of inferior rank, in imitation of this worthy pattern, would for holy and happy religious duties exchange their vain and profane exercises of May-games and summer-greens, foot and horse races, weekly and almost daily meetings and matches on the bowling

* Harleian MSS. Number 2006.

green, lavish betting of great wagers in such sorry trifles, and the stout and strong abetting of such silly vanities, amongst hundreds, and sometimes thousands of rude and vile persons, to whom they should give better examples, than encourage them to neglect their business, waste their substance, brawl and quarrel, curse and swear!—O how great is the difference between the holy exercises of religion, in God's house, and these profane exercises of lust, in the forest or field !

In the midst of the sweet comforts which he experienced in the public and private exercise of religion, the Lord was pleased to visit this his servant with a grievous affliction, by cutting off with a stroke the desire of his eyes, his dear and faithful wife; who, although well in the morning, was taken ill at supper, and departed this life the same evening.

Though sudden death has frequently been a sign of God's displeasure, as in the cases of Onan, Nadab and Abihu, Corah, Dathan and Abiram ; yet it has not always been a token of God's disapprobation : for instance, good Joshua was slain by an arrow, Rachael died on a journey, and Phineas's wife expired suddenly on hearing that the ark of God was taken. Hence let no one rashly judge, that, because the messenger which fetched her home was hasty, therefore Mrs. Bruen was not a gracious and holy woman.

This was a severe trial to Mr. Bruen; yet the

Lord so sanctified the affliction, that, by the power of divine grace, he moderated his grief in such a manner as not to weep like a man without hope, though he mourned for her death, as truly sensible of his loss.

After a while, finding it necessary again to marry, he sought another help-meet from the Lord by prayer. God in his providence granted his request, in the following manner :

Being at Manchester, on account of a religious meeting held there, he cast his eye on a very amiable and beautiful young gentlewoman, who diligently frequented that assembly ; on the beholding of whom, he confesseth that this thought arose in his heart : “ Lo ! this is the woman that the Lord hath provided for me.”

In order that he might not, however, please his eye and affections merely, he acquainted one of his most trusty servants with the matter, and desired he would make inquiry concerning the person in question. The man, being a native of the country, was the better able to accomplish his master’s wish ; and he so furnished himself with information concerning her, as to give an account to this effect, namely, that her name was Mrs. Ann Fox, sister to Mr. Fox of the Rhodes, four or five miles from Manchester ; that she was well descended both by father and mother ; her father having filled the place of comptroller to the Earl of Derby, when ambassador from

the Queen in France, and her mother being a godly matron, a descendant of the ancient and respectable families of the Addertons and the Lelands, of Lancashire; and that she herself was a virtuous and gracious young woman, well esteemed in the church of God.

On this intelligence, Mr. Bruen embraced the first opportunity to propose to her mother and friends a marriage between him and Mrs. Ann Fox; which being approved by them, he became her suitor; and by his gracious discourse and godly carriage prevailing, they were happily united in holy matrimony.

The first year of his second marriage, Mr. and Mrs. Bruen abode in her mother's house; where he and old Mr. Langley, a godly minister of Christ, were so eminently useful, that frequently after, and even at his death, he was enraptured with joy and thanksgiving at the thoughts of the same.

He left the following testimony concerning the goodness of God manifested at this time :

“ My mother-in-law giving me table for a year, we set up the exercise of religion in the house ; in the course of which time, I trust, she got saving grace; as well as my sister-in-law (now Mrs. Hinde) another half-sister of hers, their brothers William and Thomas Fox, a servant or two, and some neighbours who joined with us in the evenings. Blessed be God, who is pleased by weak means to express his great power and mercy towards us !”

At the expiration of the year, he brought his wife to Stapleford; where they enjoyed each other's company in great peace and love, and established themselves in the usual exercise of religious and domestic duties.

In the course of some time, several gentlemen of rank applied to him, some for themselves, some for their children, and others for their friends, to sojourn in his house, as was the case before; his habitation being still more famous than ever, as a school of true religion, a nursery for the plants of grace, a vineyard for trees of righteousness and fruits of holiness.

Among the rest was that worthily honored and accomplished gentleman, Thomas Wilbraham, of Woodhey, Esq., the beauty and glory of that house, and a peerless pillar of the country; who, having married his eldest daughter to Mr. John Done, heir of the house of Utkinton (a young gentleman of high birth and good parts, but much addicted to the pleasures of the world and youthful lusts) became very desirous that the young couple should dwell in Mr. Bruen's house for a season, that they might be more out of the way of evil, and obtain some religious instruction. The proposal was accepted, and they were taken into his house, with their attendants.

Mr. Done could not well away with a strict observance of the Lord's day; on which Mr. Bruen, and

ten others of his family, conspired together to do him good, speaking one after another on sanctifying the sabbath ; after which he cheerfully complied.

At another time, Mr. Bruen coming into this gentleman's chamber he found over the mantle-tree a deck of new cards ; from which he took the four knaves, and burnt them ; and he never knew him to play cards in the house afterwards.

This last circumstance brought to Mr. Bruen's recollection, that, about twenty years before, being in one of his studies, he saw a pair of tables under his feet ; which he took up, with the thirty men, and all the dice and cards he could find, and put them into a burning oven, that was then heating to bake pies ; so great was his aversion against gaming.

This he did, no doubt, not to honor them as martyrs, but to punish them as malefactors ; for I find, by some of his collections, that he held tables, cards, and dice, to be very gross offenders, and such as could not have their faults purged away but by fire.

Herein he agreed with several of the ancient fathers, and others who have written on the subject : as, Tertullian, who smote them with a rod of rebuke in general terms ; Cyprian, who struck them through as with the blow of a scorpion, writing a whole book against them in particular ; Austin and Jerome, who did not spare them as they came in

their way; Chrysostom, who cut and hewed them to pieces, with other heathenish games, as Samuel did Agag, and ground them to powder, as Moses did the golden calf; Ambrose and Hilary, who advised Christians to turn away their eyes from beholding such worldly and ungodly vanities; Gregory Nazianzen, who sharply rebuked such as would seem to celebrate the feast of Christ's nativity, and the feast of Pentecost, with the like heathenish customs, sports, and games; together with Lactantius, Arnobius, Bernard, Basil, Bede, Cassidore, Isidore, Furgentius, Salvianus, Cyril, and Oecumenius; which last mentioned farther took occasion to reprobate dicing in particular, from the word that the Apostle useth against crafty and deceitful teaching [*kubeia*] which he says is taken from the play at dice, the property whereof is, by casting and hurling here and there, to deceive by false dealing.

We shall conclude this point with a few observations which Mr. Bruen collected, to strengthen his judgment, and justify his detestation of these games:

"1. All games depending upon hazard or chance (as many call it) are to be eschewed.

"2. The prince of devils first invented the same, and the place was hell.

"3. Such gamesters were accounted infamous persons, incapable of holding any office, and unworthy any benefit of law.

"4. Dicers, harlots, and thieves, are of one corporation; and the more cunning in this art, the more wicked in their lives and manners.

"5. All gain by gaming is plain thievery, worse than usury.

"6. All play at dice is plain lottery, which to use idly or triflingly is a sin against the third and ninth commandments.

"7. There is no recreation of body or mind in these games, unless it be in the desire and hope of gain by another man's loss, which is unlawful.

"8. Cards and tables seem to be less evils; but neither of them barrel better herrings; there is such and so much craft in pricking, packing, &c.

"9. These are mixt games, consisting partly of lottery, partly of wit and industry, and oftentimes maintained with tricks of cozenage and knavery.

"10. The coat cards were in times past the images of their idols.

"11. We must abstain from such games, because, 1. They never have been, nor yet are, of good report in the church; 2. In them there is great appearance of evil; 3. The command of the chief magistrate forbiddeth them, as unlawful games; 4. They do not tend to God's glory; 5. They are causes of much hurt to our neighbour, and occasions of many sins and sorrows to the gamester himself, as well as to his family; for thus many bring a castle into a cap-case, a lordship into a cottage, a fee

simple into a fee single, an estate of abundance and superfluity to an estate of beggary and misery."

In order to prevent the mischiefs consequent on making use of these things (which were by him held in abhorrence) and to exercise the minds of his family and others unto godliness, he had two goodly Bibles, each placed on a desk in the parlour and hall, a large one in the former place, and a smaller one in the latter. A good method this, to cut off all occasions of evil, and open a way to better things!

However, Mr. Bruen entertained a good hope concerning Mr. Done, as well as his spouse; believing that she obtained saving grace, and expecting the stamp of God's grace upon him, he being convinced in judgment.—His eldest son, four daughters, and a daughter-in-law, also became pious. Mr. Done was afterwards knighted.

There again happening a defect in the public ministry at Tarvin, Mr. Bruen procured for the great congregation that faithful servant of Christ, Mr. Ar. St. (a preacher in whose ministry he delighted) and maintained him and his family.

The following is the testimony of Mr. Ar. St. in behalf of Mr. Bruen: "Good Mr. Hinde, I received your letter; but I know not what to say of that worthy servant of God, Mr. John Bruen, which you do not know already. I think I may well say of him, as it was said of Noah, that he was a just and perfect man in his time, and walked with God.

Whilst I was preacher at Tarvin, I had little maintenance but what I had from him: and with much cheerfulness did he minister both to me and mine that which was sufficient, affirming oftentimes, that he had not the less for that which we received from him. For other matters, I know not what to say of him, that you yourself know not as well or better than I: for he was ever one and the same, at home and abroad; very faithful unto God, and loving unto men; walking in the uprightness of his heart in the midst of his house. I am glad that God has put it into your heart to write something of his life and death, that the memorial of his virtues may be the better continued, and the church of God receive good thereby."

The above is given by his own preacher, a faithful eye and ear witness of the truth thereof.

About this time, Mr. Perkins, that worthy man of God, hearing much of Mr. Bruen and his house, by credible witnesses, exclaimed, "Certainly this is no other than the house of God, and for the practice and power of religion, *the very top-sail of all England!*"

It pleased the Lord daily to crown this gentleman and his house with honour, favour, beauty, and glory; insomuch that his dwelling became not much unlike a goodly tower built on a hill, which doth allure and invite the doves of the valleys to take refreshment and repose: the number of those of high rank who wished access to him still increasing, who they

were, and with what success they abode at his house, let himself declare:

“Afterwards many more desired to table with me: Lady Egerton, widow, daughter-in-law of the Lord Chancellor, then being with her company; and my cousin, Thomas Dutton, of Dutton, with his wife, son, and daughter (now Lady Gerard) being ten of family; four gentlewomen of Hatton, sisters, and a maid servant who attended them, called, I think, Mary Sherrington.

“God in his mercy began first with the last mentioned female; who, though she was at first froward against religious duties, yet afterwards, being grievously afflicted in conscience, and soundly humbled, had a most comfortable conversion, blessed be God.

“Two of the sisters had a more easy conversion; and the other two, being honest, modest maids, were convinced.

“My cousin Dutton being pressed and charged by some of great place to maintain his royalty of minstrelsy for piping and dancing on the Sabbath day, I and my family, together with my minister, Mr. Robert Watts (a reverend, worthy man of God, whom we called *Old Eli*) were earnest against it, and prevailed so far, that he promised all piping and dancing on the Sabbath should cease, both morning and afternoon: so his licenses were made, and so they continue to this day. And we had great peace and comfort together, blessed be God.”

Now as it sometimes cometh to pass, that in a fair calm there ariseth a sudden and violent storm, that scattereth vessels which have for a long time rode quietly in the harbour; so did it please the Lord to send another tempest of grief among the sweet enjoyments of this happy family, by taking to himself Mr. Bruen's second wife; in consequence of which the whole company was dispersed not long after.

She had lived with him ten years, much beloved and respected by those who had the happiness of being acquainted with her, and bore nine children.

“Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously; but thou excellest them all.” *Prov. xxxi. 10–12, 26–29.*

Without fraud or flattery, it may be said, in a good measure, such a woman, such a wife, such a mother, such a governess, was this gentlewoman in her family. She was also in herself of a gracious and amiable disposition, having an humble heart,

and holy affections, beautified and adorned with that ornament of the hidden man of the heart, a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price. Ripe in knowledge and rich in grace, full of faith and good works, she held communion with God and the godly, in all the duties of piety and charity ; and so continuing faithful unto death, she obtained what she desired and expected, *the crown of life*.

What were the heavy consequences of this affliction, Mr. Bruen himself has set down in a pathetical manner :

“ When it pleased God to take away my wife, then all mourned for the loss ; as also for that my tablers must now part, being about twenty-one in number, my son John and his being then with me. But on requesting it, they thankfully continued with me another quarter ; in which time we had much comfort together, but often mourned to think of the quarter's end.—The last day sitting at dinner together, we were all so full of heaviness, that in effect no meat was eaten. I was forced to hide myself, being unable to take leave of them, all being so full of grief.”

When David and Jonathan were parting, they kissed each other, and wept till the former exceeded. The case was not very different here ; when the company were about to be separated, they kissed, and wept one with another, till Mr. Bruen exceeded.

He now began to frame his affections for a single life, and to draw his family into a narrower compass, resolving to live more privately, at least for a season, for the sake of his relatives.

After this he continued unmarried about five years and a half; two of which were spent in his own house; during which time a godly friend came to see him, and inquiring as to his estate, he told him he owed about one hundred pounds, had four daughters, and several sons; on which he advised Mr. Bruen to leave his house for a while, and go to Chester; at which place Mr. Bifield* was then a pious and powerful preacher of the everlasting Gospel. He went thither, where he continued three years, having the company of Mr. and Mrs. Bifield to dinner every lecture-day, namely, Wednesdays and Fridays.

During his residence at Chester, God stirred up the hearts of many neighbours to join with him in evening prayer, and some attended at morning prayer also.—His sister Hardware, then a widow, had a convenient way through her garden, and constantly attended with her family, frequently accompanied by several of her many friends and neighbours.

These meetings did not escape the tongue of slander, being traduced by some, and excepted against by others; but the nature of them being better

* Neal's Puritans, vol. 1, p. 273.

known, they were carried on free from censure; and the Almighty blessed them to the conviction and conversion of sinners, and to the confirmation of saints

While at this place, he paid all his debt, gave two of his daughters in marriage, preferred one or two of his sons, and maintained the poor of his own parish in the country, allowing all the produce of his two mills in Stapleford for that purpose. Besides this, he was not slack in relieving those who craved alms at his gates.

Leaving Chester, he returned to his house at Stapleford.—He married again, taking to wife Margaret, by whom he had one daughter, and a son.

It is observable, that, notwithstanding the Lord was pleased several times to exchange Mr. Bruen's comforts for crosses, yet himself was never changed, nor moved from his stedfastness. In all his afflictions he was willing to be humbled, but would not be dejected or discouraged; having learnt, in whatever state he was, therewith to be content.—Wherever he was, his desires and endeavours were bent to do good. Wherever he went, whatsoever he did, the presence of the Lord Jesus was with him, and his good hand was upon him, to prosper him in all his ways, and to strengthen his hand and heart in well-doing.—In every place he became a nursing father to the children of God, as well babes as young men in Christ.—Notwithstanding his great expenses,

both at Chester and in the country, in maintaining the poor, and entertaining the godly, his estate was not impaired, but increased, the Lord enlarging his substance, as it is written, "Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise both of this life, and of that which is to come."—For all the blessings and comforts, whether corporeal or spiritual, whether received by himself, or conferred on others through him as a means, his heart (tasting and relishing the love of God therein) was marvelously enlarged in rendering thanks to his holy name, even for the least of his mercies.

Thus far has Mr. Bruen assisted us to spin out his Life with his own fingers ; but as the curious workmanship of a cloth of arras is but little seen while in the loom, or folded up, the beauty thereof, the knots and flowers, the pomegranates and lilies, the portraits of princes and great personages, being undiscernible ; so the history of this gentleman's Life, thus woven and wrapped up together, though it contains many excellent things, cannot fully display the glory of his gifts and graces, duties and services ; it will therefore be necessary to take a more particular view of some special passages of his life ; which, for a more orderly proceeding therein, may be reduced to three general heads, namely :

- I. *His conversing with God ;*
- II. *His conversation in the world ; and,*
- III. *His departure out of the world.*

I. His conversing with God.

When the Lord called Mr. Bruen out to work in raising up a spiritual temple, as well in himself as others, he in a great measure filled him with the spirit of grace and wisdom ; so that he was enabled to work either upon gold and silver (which may be compared to persons of rank) or brass and timber (which may resemble those of lower condition ;) and as he gave him wisdom and grace, so did he endue him with fortitude and strength to manage the Christian life, and to fight valiantly under the banner of the Prince of Peace, breaking through all difficulties that might stand in the way of his duty.

Having found acceptance with God, and tasted the sweetness of true religion, he laboured to maintain communion with God in Christ, by a conscientious performance of four particular duties, daily, *viz.*

I. Meditation ;

II. Observation of the Lord's ways and works, mercies and judgments ;

III. Invocation of God's name in prayer, and praise for blessings received ;

IV. Imitation of his heavenly Father.

I. *Meditation.*

As Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Hezekiah, Paul, and many others, walked with God, kept their hearts in his presence, sought the light of his countenance, studied his word, and considered his works; so did he, every day, more or less, set his head and heart a work, by serious meditation, to draw nearer to God, to grow in knowledge, grace, and spiritual strength. This he knew was the mark and character of a blessed man—to delight in the law of the Lord, and therein to meditate day and night.

As a help to this duty, he usually carried with him some part of the Bible, or his sermon notebook, when in the fields or on a journey. When within doors, he gave himself much to reading the word, making collections of promises, precepts, comforts, mercies, judgments, marks of God's children, brands of wicked men, &c. He likewise diligently perused the works of divers learned and godly men, and kept a commonplace book of what he found worthy observation therein.

The gain which he got by this holy exercise was, an increase of godliness; and godliness, we know, is *great gain*.

By this means many noisome lusts, that, like caterpillars or canker-worms, are wont to breed in the best trees, were destroyed; and many unsavory thoughts dislodged: in short, he herein enjoyed heaven upon earth.

II. *Observation of the Lord's ways and works, mercies and judgments.*

It was the ancient profession and practice of the people of God to wait upon the Lord, and observe his dealings with the just and with the wicked. [See *Isaiah* xxvi. 7—10.]

Much in the same manner did this faithful servant of Christ raise his thoughts and quicken his soul to a due observation of the ways and works of God, both as to his mercies towards the godly, and his judgments against sinners.

The following instances, among others, he has left upon record:

“A few years before my brother Hardware died, he had R. K. in his service, who is now an innholder in Chester. The said R. K. was, as many thought, bewitched, and waxed weaker and weaker. My brother sent for me and my family to spend a day with him in fasting and prayer. Good Mr. Watts the preacher was then with me, and accompanied me and others of my family to the Peile. We found R. K. exceedingly sick and weak, like an anatomy, nothing to look at but skin and bones, and not likely to live a day, all hope of life being gone. He was brought and laid in a bed in the chamber where we prayed. The very same evening he began to amend, the next morning he walked abroad, and the third day he had so recovered his strength as to be able to work, to the great rejoicing of the family. *All laud and praise to God.*

“*Anno Domini* 1601, in the summer time, John Robinson, my servant, going with his cart, laden, he fell, and the wheel went over his leg, but did not hurt him at all. *Laus Deo.*

“*Anno Domini* 1602, in July, my son John, being in Peak's-moor, took up a scythe, to try how he could mow; when it entered his stocking upon the shin-bone, and following his leg, shaved the hair, and came out at the back part thereof, without touching the skin. *Laus Deo.*

“The same month, and in the same meadow, one casting a pikel up and down, before and behind him, the greins thereof fell on both sides of a person's leg who stood behind, and did not hurt him. *Hallelujah.*

“Memorandum. In *Anno* 1613, in the hay harvest, one Richard Rogers, that dwelt in my farm at Wimble Strafford, under Mr. Thomas Puleston, my tenant there, seeing two godly persons going in the way, said to one who was with him, Now I will dance, and swagger, and swear, to anger and madden yonder two Puritans; and he did so, to their great grievance: but presently the revenging hand of God was upon him; this wicked fellow fell sick, was carried home in a cart, and within three days died, most fearfully.”

Mr. Bruen likewise notices a most remarkable judgment inflicted on a poor boy at Northwich, whose name was Thomas Harrison, his age eleven or twelve.

This boy was so wonderfully afflicted, that many deemed him to be really possessed with a devil; others thought he was bewitched; while some ascribed the whole to natural causes; few acknowledging (as this gentleman did) that, although Satan might have a finger, yet God had the chief hand in this judgment.

Almost with a continuance, the boy shewed himself to have such extraordinary strength, that if he folded his hands together, no man could pull them asunder; if he rolled his head, or tossed his whole body, no man could stay or restrain him. To the astonishment of his hearers, he would howl like a dog, mew like a cat, roar like a bear, froth and foam like a boar.

When any prayed with him, his passions were the strongest, and his rage and violence the greatest, he being ready to fly in their faces, and to drown their voices by his clamours, yells, and outcries. If one came near him with a Bible, though ever so secretly concealed, yet would he run and ramp upon him with great violence, to get it from him and rend it to pieces, as he did do by several.

Sometimes he would lie along, as if quite dead, his colour gone, and his mouth so wide open, that on a sudden he would thrust both hands into it at once.

Notwithstanding he was brought so low, weak, and feeble, as to natural strength, that he was reduced,

as it were, to a mere skeleton; yet would he skip and leap up and down, from his bed to the table, from the table to the window, from the window to his bed again, and all with the agility of a professed tumbler; and, what makes it more admirable, his legs grew close to his buttocks, and were therefore useless in these feats of activity.

Sometimes his chin was drawn up to his nose, so that his mouth could scarcely be seen; at other times, his chin and forehead were drawn almost together, like a bended bow.

The Bishop, hearing of this wonderful affliction, sent for the child, and prayed with him; on which occasion he became so outrageous, that he flew out of bed, and affrighted the men-servants so, that one of them fell into a swoon; and there was such a stir about him, that the Bishop was glad to lay hold of the boy, ramping at the window to have gotten out that way. They could not find him a counterfeit, as some imagined.

The Bishop, in compassion to the poor boy, granted a licence, together with the High Commissioners, for a private fast in his father's house, as a means to help and release him. The licence ran thus:

Having seen the bodily affliction of this child, and observed in sundry fits very strange effects and operations, either proceeding from some natural, unknown causes, or of some diabolical practices; We think it convenient and fit, for the ease and deliverance of the said child from the said grievous affliction, that prayer be made publicly for him by the minister of the parish

&c. and that certain preachers, namely, these following, Mr. Gerrard, Mr. Harvey, Mr. Pierson, &c. these and none other to repair to the said child by turns, as their leisure will serve, and to use their discretion for private prayers and fasting, for the ease and comfort of the afflicted, &c.

RIC. CESTREN.

DAVID YALE.

GRIFFITH VAUGHAN.

HUGH BURCHES.

Mr. Bruen says, that Mr. Harvey and Mr. Pierson, two godly preachers, prayed and fasted with the boy, as well as himself, and twenty or thirty other persons: but the Lord gave no deliverance at that time.

The following strange speeches of this afflicted boy, which he uttered when in his fits, without any knowledge of what he either said or did, were taken from his mouth by faithful witnesses:

“Jesus saith, The devil, when he comes, takes away my hearing, seeing, understanding, hands, legs, that I should have no senses, nor limbs, to glorify God withal.

“Jesus saith, If they would have cast out the evil spirit, they should have come better provided.

“Jesus saith, Some men did think that he that prayed had a better faith than the other; but he had not.

“Jesus saith, I have but three devils. It is like one of the spirits will go out of me, and go and take counsel of a great number of foul spirits, and come again and trouble me worse.

“Jesus saith, Some folk will say that the witch will not look one in the face, but she will look here a way and there a way: [and so he turned his hands this way and that.]

“Jesus saith, The witch says she hath done me no hurt that

she knows of. A witch may overlook a child; but she cannot make him in such a case as I am in.

"The devil is afraid when he hears any word that he must be cast out, then he quakes.

"Jesus saith, Now the witch would fain undo that which she hath done; but now she cannot undo it.

"Jesus saith, Some say if I were bewitched or possessed, I could neither move my tongue nor my lips: but the devil can move both my tongue and my lips.

"Satan, I am bound to a hard 'prenticeship; for thou wilt not give me leave, neither holyday nor work-day, to eat a morsel of bread.

"The Papist that brought the stinking weed and laid it to my nose, if God had not had a stroke in this, would have cast out the devil. And a boy was confederate with him. Now the devil is possessed of their souls; and he must continue a little while with me, but a great while with them.

"God pulls the devil back with a ring in his nose; yet the devil shakes my faith as if it would go out of me.

"They may know there is some ill thing in me; for when I would say my prayers, he would come up and stop me, and then I must stay a little; and then again, and he would stay me.

[Being in a sore fit of rage, biting his hands, gnashing his teeth, foaming like a boar, and casting blood and filth out of his mouth, he uttered these words:]

"Proud witch, witch proud! I will tell you how these witches work: all upon life, all upon life; but they cannot take my life from me.

"Well, these drunkards and whoremasters do not think upon their sins: well, how then? There is no drunkard, that doth drink one spoonful or drop of drink more than doth suffice nature, but the devil doth pen it down in his book: well, it is a great book, and he doth keep it close until the day of judgment.

"And then he will lay it to their faces. At which time the hills will tremble and quake, and the devil will quake; yea, he doth quake for fear now.

"Well, some would think it a great while to be bound with the devil as I am, a twelvemonth or two years; but it is better to be so than to wallow in drunkenness, swearing, and whoring; for the devil doth work in their souls.

"Well, some will say, how can the devil lie in so little a room? Well, the devil is as the wind; for when he did take a man away

out of a chamber, he came in at a little hole. But how did he take him away? even out at the top of the chimney.

“Well, there are some Papists and some Atheists, and some of no religion. Woe be to those that die suddenly, for they have no time to repent, and especially those that live in drunkenness, or whoring, or swearing.

“Jesus saith, They say he shall not out of me, but when God comes, he will strike home.”

What has been said shall suffice concerning the second duty which Mr. Bruen performed daily, namely, a careful observation of the Lord's ways and works, mercies and judgments, amongst the sons of men.

III. *Invocation of God's name in prayer, and praise for blessings received.*

This duty he endeavoured to perform according to the apostle's directions, “in every place lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting.” He did not content himself with worshipping God morning and evening in the family, without opening his heart and pouring out his soul in private before the Lord.

His solitary devotions were not confined to any particular place, either within or without doors; but he always embraced the fittest opportunity, both as to time and place; following herein the example of Christ and many holy men: Sometimes he might be found in the upper rooms, with Peter; sometimes in the fields, with Isaac; sometimes on the mount, and at other times in the garden, with our Lord;

sometimes on a journey, with Jacob; sometimes on his bed, with David; sometimes in his closet, with Cornelius. When at home, he had a variety of places which he interchangeably used for private intercourse with his heavenly Father; lest, by frequenting any place in particular, he should be suspected of vanity or hypocrisy: If in the house, he had his closets, studies, chambers, &c.—if out of doors, he had his gardens, orchards, arbours, groves, woods, fields, walks, and shades, where he delighted to hold communion with the Almighty, and to seek his favour, which is better than life.

He conscientiously performed the duty of private prayer seven times a day, viz.

1. In the morning, before any of the family were stirring;

2. Before his breakfast, after family devotion;

3. Immediately before dinner;

4. A little after dinner;

5. A short time before supper;

6. Not long after supper;

7. Just before he took his bed to go to rest.

Nor was he more plentiful for the number, than powerful in the manner, of these his devotions; for, being full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, he could speak to God by his own Spirit, in his own words, according to his own will, and in the name of his own Son: and so he could not but both speak and speed well.

His prayers were usually fortified by faith, supported by hope, inflamed with zeal, beautified with humility, purified by sincerity, and established by constancy.

To his private prayers he frequently added private fasting; which he observed with such a degree of austerity, as greatly to weaken his body, as well as to afflict his soul.

It is recorded of James the Just, that by the continual bowing of himself before the Lord, in earnest prayer, his knees became as hard as those of a camel. I will not compare this John with that James, either for sanctity of heart, or austerity of life; but for their affections and actions, prayers and knees, they may well be likened one to the other.

In these his private devotions, his desires were principally bent to search his own heart, to examine his life, to confess and bewail his special sins and infirmities, to crave the pardon of and power against them. If he found any evil in his family, either moral or natural, he here brought it before God to procure the help of his healing hand. Here also he mourned for the affliction of Joseph and the desolations of Jerusalem; for the gross sins of the time, for the barrenness or backslidings of many professors, for their embracing of the world, and forsaking of their first love.

Here also he rejoiced in the Lord, and praised his

holy name for the many temporal and spiritual comforts he enjoyed, and sometimes for great deliverances which had been wrought out for him.

And thus did he converse with God in the duties of prayer and praise.

IV. *Imitation of his heavenly Father.*

Knowing it is the duty of all God's children to be holy, even as he is holy, in all manner of conversation. Mr. Bruen laboured to confirm himself to the image of Him that had begot him to a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead; he panted after a renewal in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness; well knowing, that the Christian is called to a resemblance of Jesus Christ, in doing good both to friends and enemies, and in rendering evil to none; in being wise, patient, faithful, hating iniquity, and delighting in the saints. Respecting these things, he set the Lord always before his eyes, and in some degree followed his blessed pattern with a good conscience; and so beholding with open face, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, he was changed from glory into glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Thus have we declared the first of the three general heads proposed, for the further opening of Mr. Bruen's virtuous life, namely *his conversing with God*. We come now to,

II. His conversation in the world.

Socrates, being asked what countryman he was, replied, that he was a citizen of the world. This venerable gentleman was, by generation, a fellow-citizen with Socrates ; but, by *re-generation*, he was a denizen of the holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem. Though he lived amongst the children of a vain world, yet his conversation was in heaven. He greatly desired to follow the under-mentioned rules ;

1. A holy resolution to use the world as not abusing it, nor being abused by it.

2. A full purpose always to keep his heart as in God's presence, knowing that he heard all his words, and beheld all his actions.

3. A constant and conscientious standing and striving against all sin.

4. A godly desire in every company to do or receive good.

5. A good intention to deal justly with all men.

6. An honest disposition to take doubtful things in the best sense.

7. A careful watchfulness over his heart, tongue, and spirit, that his words, being powdered with salt, might minister grace, and not grief, to the hearers.

8. A great willingness to be slow to speak, and swift to hear.

9. An utter renouncing of all the vain customs of the world, neither following the fashions nor serving the humours of foolish or vile persons, nor staying longer than necessary in the company of such.

10. A good inclination to seek and follow peace with all men, cutting off all occasions of strife and variance with speed.

11. A contented mind and good courage in every state, entertaining crosses with patience, and turning them to their best use; embracing all comforts with thanksgiving, and bringing forth the fruits thereof.

12. An unfeigned desire and endeavour to nourish his peace with God, walking humbly and uprightly before him; referring all that he thought, spoke, or did, to the furtherance of his own reckoning, and to the praise and glory of his Maker.

According to these, and similar rules of righteousness and holiness, he was taught of God to order his conversation aright, in the fear of the Lord.

As an instance of his peaceable disposition, we give the following anecdote: A gentleman, who lived in the neighborhood of Stapleford, conceiving a dislike to Mr. Bruen on a small occasion, sent his servant with a message forbidding him or any of his family to set a foot on any of his land. To which Mr. Bruen replied, that if it pleased his master, or any of his family, to come into *his* fields, or his *house*, they should be kindly welcome. This had such an effect on the gentleman as to melt him into tears and tenderness.

It is true, he was by nature froward, fierce, angry, and hasty; but, by the renovating power of divine grace, he was become calm in temper, and mild in

speech, easily persuaded to that which was good, and with as great facility dissuaded from that which was evil.

An honorable Judge in open court gave the following testimony concerning him, when complaint was made by a neighbouring gentleman of some wrong sustained in consequence of a water-course round Mr. Bruen's mills :—" I cannot but think you wrong Mr. Bruen ; I will undertake for him, make him but sensible of any error, and he will both acknowledge it, and make you double amends."

To sum up the excellencies of this gentleman, he was pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits.

When he beheld any engrossed in heathenish sports and idolatrous feasts, he looked angry, and spoke to them roughly ; yet he mourned for the hardness of their hearts, and as it were bled inwardly for the wickedness of their lives.

If he met with mockers, contemners of God, and despisers of good things, he would not cast pearls before swine, nor that which was holy unto dogs ; but he would turn away his face from such, without even saluting them.

But if he found any poor souls erring from the right way, yet desiring a guide, he would rejoice to do him good, by wholesome instructions, loving admonitions, godly exhortations, and good directions ; to such as were poor giving Bibles, catechisms, and other religious books.

His house was like a common inn, to such *Israelites* as travelled between London and Ireland, and those who came from several parts of Lancashire and Cheshire to Chester fairs, &c.,

The table which he ordinarily kept for hospitality was bountiful and plentiful, though not excessive and superfluous, being furnished with a variety of God's good creatures that were always ready to his hands.

His buttery was open and free for any gentleman, serving-man, or countryman, so long as they kept within the bounds of moderation and sobriety ; but, indeed, the order of his house was so well known, that excessive drinking, quaffing, carousing, &c., were very rarely attempted there.

The necessities of the poor greatly afflicted his heart ; and as he had a heart to pity, he had a hand ready to relieve them.

He usually filled the bellies of great multitudes, both of his own and other parishes, who resorted to his house twice a week for that purpose.

His purse was the poor man's coffer ; and he sometimes lent money to such, admonishing those who borrowed to remember their promise, and to pay again if they would borrow again. But he would rather have forgiven a debt, than exact it from such as were willing, but unable to pay.

In a certain time of great dearth, he invited the poorest of his neighbours to his store-house, desiring

them to bring their bags with them ; on which occasion he distributed among them fourteen bushels of corn. This he did when most of his family were at a religious meeting from home.

As he was careful to fill the bellies, so was he to clothe the backs, of the poor ; their loins blessed him, being warmed with the fleece of his flock, or clothed by the cost of his purse.

It was his custom, every year, against winter, to send four or five pounds to Chester, to provide clothing for the poor, which he wisely divided among several families, giving to some one year, and to others another.

Mr. Bruen might truly say with Job, "I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me ; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor ; and the cause which I knew not I searched out. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth." *Job xxix. 12, 13, 15, 16, 17.*

To those who had occasion for him in that capacity, he was a counsellor, to defend their righteous and just causes, pleading for the poor and the needy.

Though he abounded in the fruits of mercy towards rich and poor, professors and profane ; yet did he in an especial manner show himself affection-

ate and sympathetic towards the despised followers of the Lord of life and glory.

He ever held a gracious harmony in judgment with such divines and professors as were most sound and entire in the knowledge and acknowledgment of the truth.

He esteemed the peace of Zion, and the prosperity of Jerusalem, before his chief joy ; the care of all the churches around lying continually upon him.

Whenever he heard of gloomy tidings from Bohemia, Hungary, Germany, &c., he sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven ; herein imitating good Nehemiah, when he heard that the remnant of the Jews were in great affliction, that the wall of Jerusalem was broken down, and the gates thereof burnt.

In visiting the afflicted, in mind, body, or estate, he was careful and diligent ; and he was reputed one of the best spiritual physicians in the country. If any were troubled in conscience, afflicted in soul for sin, molested by Satan, or terrified by God's judgments, happy was he that could have Mr. Bruen to come and see him ; his very presence afforded a degree of ease and refreshment ; but his godly exhortations, wholesome admonitions, divine instructions sweet words of comfort, and especially his faithful and fervent prayers, were many times as so many remedies against their grievous miseries and mala-

dies ; the issue and success of his gracious endeavours being often effectual, either for relief or release.

Knowing that the fashions of this world pass away, with the lust thereof, he could not be brought into a liking of the new fangled, vain and foolish fashions and customs, as to attire, ridiculous gestures, and formal compliments ; on the contrary, he heartily abhorred and shunned them.—Being at a High Sheriff's feast, at which were several Lords *spiritual* and temporal, a health was begun by one of them to the Prince, which was passed on with a deal of ceremonial solemnity. It coming to his turn, he was pressed to drink to the Prince's health ; to which he replied, " You may drink to his health, and I will pray for it, wishing you may do the same for yours."

He was faithful in reproving sin, and would not fail to admonish his friends, either by word or by writing.

The following is an extract of a letter directed to a cousin of his, to whom the Lord gave repentance two or three years before his death :

"I have often compared you, cousin, to Thomas Wilbraham, whom the people of God think to be in heaven ; for in many things you were like him ; but now you are broken off, and in many things differ from him. As, 1. He loved the assembly of God's people, on the holy Sabbath, both forenoon and afternoon, though his body was as unwieldy as

yours; which you do not. 2. He loved often to communicate; which you do not. 3. He loved to have the company of the godly in his house; which you do not, but rather glory to have your house made a thoroughfare of by profane persons. 4. He would have his family publicly catechized by a godly minister; which you will not. 5. He had every day a portion of holy Scripture read, and prayer morning and evening, and often singing of psalms; which you have not. 6. He abandoned and kept out of his house all roguish players; which you do not. 7. He was usually at the public exercises of religion at Tarporley, and often at Northwich; which you are not. 8. He had a liberal disposition to relieve the godly in distress; which you have not. 9. Although he had the world at will, as you have, yet he gloried not in it, but honored God with his substance; which you do not. 10. He grew in knowledge and holiness, with an hatred of sin, and a love to God's children; which you do not. I fear, cousin, you are in a lethargy, or that the alarum-bell of your conscience is silenced. Take heed; it is a dangerous thing to grieve the Spirit of God;" &c.

The foregoing is at once a good instance of his testimony against sin, and an honorable evidence in the behalf of Thomas Wilbraham, of Woodhey, Esq.

Mr. Bruen was kind and tender-hearted to his tenants. He did not grind their faces by great

finer, or crush their backs with heavy rents; he did not use their labour without hire, nor call for their work without wages; it was the very joy of his heart to see his tenants thrive under him. His behaviour towards them was like that of Augustus towards his subjects; he would not have any of them come before him with fear and trembling, as though they were approaching an elephant; nor would he that any should leave his presence with a sad heart, as though they had been with a tyrant.

Having taken notice of Mr. Bruen's life, as to *his conversing with God*, and *his conversation in the world*, we come now to the last of the three general heads proposed, *viz.*:

III. His departure out of the world.

This head may not improperly be subdivided into four articles, namely,

I. His preparation for death;

II. His resolution to bear all afflictions attendant on his departure;

III. His gracious confidence of a blessed change;

IV. His happy constancy in the faith of Christ to the end.

I. *His preparation for death.*

As his life was employed in meditating upon that important change which is common to all men, so was he continually preparing for the same: the Lord had taught him so to number his days as to

apply his heart unto wisdom. All his studies and labours—all his holy duties and services—all his prayers and tears—all his watchings and fastings—all his desires and endeavours—were especially directed to this purpose, namely, that he might run so as to obtain, fight so as to overcome, and finally to be more than a conqueror in Him that loved him and gave himself for him. It was his care to live so as that he might not be afraid to die.

To be more particular, he, by the grace of God, endeavoured to set a due estimation on the pleasures, profits, honours, and favours of the world; and, instead of delighting in these transitory things, to fix his affections on those that are above: he considered his bodily infirmities as indications of his departure, his spiritual rejoicings as foretastes of everlasting felicity, and that to the godly death is the gate of life, which admits them into an inheritance free from sin, sorrow, temptation, and affliction, where there are rivers of eternal pleasure, and a fullness of never-ending joy: in short, he esteemed himself a stranger and pilgrim on the earth, here having no abiding city, but seeking one to come.

II. *His resolution to bear all afflictions attendant on his departure.*

Being armed with the whole panoply of God, he had courage to fight manfully, under his peaceful Prince's banner, against temptations, afflictions,

crosses, and losses. If called thereunto, he would have been content to be cast into a burning furnace, a lion's den, or a caldron of boiling oil, for his Lord and Master; for he counted not his life dear to him, so he might win Christ, and be found in him.

III. *His gracious confidence of a blessed change.*

It was observed by many friends, both at home and abroad, that, when he saw he was drawing towards his journey's end, his faith was exceedingly increased, his hope and rejoicing in God enlarged, his love and zeal wonderfully inflamed; so that, as it were, casting out the gauntlet of defiance against all assaults of his enemies, with the apostle he could say, "Who shall separate me from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?—I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Being thus settled in his mind, it pleased God to visit him with sickness; an account of which is given in the following letter from Mrs. Bruen:

"I call to mind some words which he spake to me alone, at the time when it pleased the Lord to visit him, which was on the day after the Sabbath. That morning he rose exceeding early, and, having been

in private prayer with God, as his usual manner was, he afterwards performed the duty of prayer with the family. This being done, he went into his study, and continued there till dinner, as he was wont to do; and after dinner he retired into his study again. He had not been there more than an hour or two when it pleased the Lord to visit him with a sort of shaking ague; on which he withdrew thence, and laid himself down on his bed in the little parlour. Then said I to him, 'I fear, Sir, your early rising hath done you hurt.' To which he replied, 'If you had seen, wife, such glorious things as I saw this morning, being in private prayer to God, you would not have said so; for they were so wonderful and unspeakable, that, with St. Paul, whether I was in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell. Thus it hath pleased the Lord, lest I should be too much exalted by this glorious sight, to give me a buffet in the flesh.' Which things he spake to me with exceeding great joy."

A like report of ravishing sights (which he had not long before) himself made to some of his friends, after he had one day been at private prayer in his grove; the particulars of which he would not disclose; but only told them in general, with great tenderness of heart, and tears both of joy and sorrow in his eyes.

He now had a strong persuasion that he should not live long, and that he should in a little time exchange this world for a better.

His confidence was his comfort in all his sickness ; during which he uttered many gracious and heavenly speeches, from several parts of the Old and New Testaments, as the following, and such others :

“O how great is thy goodness, [Lord,] which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men ! (a)

“How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God ! how great is the sum of them ! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand ; when I awake, I am still with thee. (b)

“I trusted in thee, O Lord ; I said, Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand. I am continually with thee ; thou hast holden me by my right hand. (c)

“Thou shalt guide with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth ; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. (d)

“I know whom I have believed ; and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. (e)

“O love the Lord, all ye his saints : for the Lord

(a) Psalm xxxi. 19. (b) Psalm cxxxix. 17, 18.

(c) Psalm xxxi. 14, 15. and Psalm lxxiii. 23.

(d) Psalm lxxiii. 24, 25, 26.

(e) 2 Tim. i. 12

preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. (f)

“As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God ; when shall I come and appear before God ? (g)

“Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth : for thy love is better than wine. Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth ; therefore do the virgins love thee. Draw me, [and I] will run after thee. (h)

“God is not unrighteous, to forget [our] work, and labour of love, which [we] have showed toward his name. (i)

“Faithful is he that calleth [us,] who also will do it. (k)

“[Remember me, O] my God, for good, according to all that I have done for [thy] people ; and wipe not out my [kindness] that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof. Remember me, O my God, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.” (l)

Some of these holy and heavenly sentences he uttered at his first awaking in the morning, some in prayer with his family, some in ejaculations, some

(f) Psalm xxxi. 23. (g) Psalm xlii. 1, 2.

(h) Cant. i. 2, 3, 4. (i) Heb. vi. 10.

(k) 1 Thess. v. 24.

(l) Neh. v. 19. and Neh. xiii. 14, 22.

as the issue of his secret and silent meditations, and some in conference with such of his Christian friends as came to visit him, to minister comfort or other counsel.

His heart was as a fountain full of the waters of life, which being now broken up by affliction, the rivulets of grace and truth issued out amain.

IV. His happy constancy in the faith of Christ to the end.

Although his bodily infirmities increased, he would by no means be kept from the house of God on the Lord's day, so long as he could walk or ride, which was till within eight or nine weeks of his death.

He usually went to the church on foot, which stood about a mile from his house; and was accompanied thither by all his family, except two or three of the servants, who were left to take care of the house. He called on such of his tenants as lived in the way, who also went with him to church. He marched on with a joyful and glad heart, as a leader of the Lord's host; the company singing psalms as they went, particularly the 84th :

“How pleasant is thy dwelling place,
O Lord of Hosts, to me !
The tabernacles of thy grace,
How pleasant, Lord, they be !” &c.,

Which they sounded forth so harmoniously, that many who heard them afar off were much refreshed and delighted therewith ; and some, as they drew nearer, were brought to a greater liking of the society of God's children.

His arrival at church was constantly before the beginning of prayers, that so he and his company might the more comfortably join in the worship of Almighty God ; which he did with such a reverent attention, gracious affection, and holy carriage, as greatly induced others to be more conscientious therein.

He seldom went to dinner after the prayers and sermon, but continued in church till after the evening service, accompanied by others who were willing to stay with him. During this interval of public devotion, he repeated the sermon, (which he had carefully taken down, as before has been observed to have been his custom) and joined his companions in singing psalms, and conferring on the best things.

After the evening service, he and his goodly company journeyed homewards, with much comfort and joy in their hearts, endeavouring as they passed along to increase each other's knowledge, faith, and obedience, by repeating and conferring upon the evening sermon, &c.

If any among them were afflicted, they would be ready to counsel, comfort, and pray for such: and

to those of them who were troubled in their consciences, Mr. Bruen would without delay act the part of the good Samaritan, by pouring into their afflicted spirits the wine and oil of heavenly consolation.

And in the evening exercise at his own house, he was so full of life and zeal, that, as well as his family, many of his tenants and neighbours greatly desired and delighted to hear him repeat the sermons, press the special points, urge the conscience, and pour out his cries to God.

So great was the comfort and joy which he experienced in holy duties on that day which has not improperly been called the Christian's market-day, that he frequently expressed an earnest wish that every day were a Sabbath or a fast-day!—When the Sabbath was passed, he blessed God for having given him one more of these happy days than he looked for.

The week-days were rather tedious, his strength decaying, and his bodily infirmities increasing: however, he would not be dejected, but endeavoured to raise up his heart by faith and hope, speaking to his family and friends much in the following manner:

“The time is not long: I must shortly lay down this my tabernacle, and then I shall get the start of you all, and shall celebrate an everlasting Sabbath before the Lord, with his holy angels and blessed saints, in the highest heavens.”

This he spake rejoicingly, but yet with tears.

He every day grew more and more weary of the world, and was best contented when he could dispatch worldly businesses with fewest words.

Like good Hezekiah, he set his house in order, and made his will, so leaving all things in terms of peace and love: and by this means his mind was disburdened of many earthly cares, and felt greater liberty to think and speak of spiritual and heavenly affairs; which he did not omit, but as he could stir about in the house, either to the hall, parlour, or kitchen, he would drop wholesome words of comfort among such as he met with, and ceased not to speak of holy or heavenly things to the rest of his family.

When persons came to see him, he would frequently say,

“Alas! good souls, what are ye come to see? a poor wretch, a worm, and no man, a poor dying man. I may now say with Job, If I wait, the grave is my house; I have made my bed in the darkness. I have said to corruption, Thou art my father; to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister. And yet I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. Therefore we faint not: but though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed daily. And so our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for

the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself."

To some who endeavoured to comfort him with the hope of recovery, he would say,

"My time is in the Lord's hand, and it is not likely it can be long: my days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart; my task is ended—the Lord hath no more work for me to do; my warfare is accomplished, my race is run out; I now only hope and wait for the crown of righteousness, which Christ has purchased for me, and God has promised to me."

He exhorted such professors of religion as came to see him, as well babes in Christ as young men and fathers, to hold on and hold out, never to be weary in well-doing, but to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, to increase in faith, and abound in love; telling them not to be discouraged by taunts and mocks, railings and revilings, with other persecutions for the sake of Christ; but to be faithful unto death, that they might receive the crown of life. And in order that his instructions might make a deeper impression on their hearts, he recommended to them his own experience and example, from the time he first embraced and professed the Gospel. His words were much to the following effect :

“When first I began to profess religion, there was almost none in the whole shire that were acquainted with the power and practice of it.

“I [was, as the psalmist speaketh,] like a pelican of the wilderness ; I [was] like an owl of the desert. Mine enemies [did] reproach me all the day, and [were] mad against me. (m)

“I was a wonder of the world, yea a monster of men, and many did bend their tongues like bows for lies, and shoot out their arrows, even bitter words.

“And yet for all this that came upon me, I did not forget the name of my God, neither did I deal falsely in his covenant. My heart was not turned back, neither did my steps decline from his way. But being strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, I found his grace was sufficient for me, both to confirm me in the truth, and to preserve me blameless and harmless, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. And so, through the good hand of my God which was upon me, I did overcome ; for the work of God did prosper in my hand, and mine adversaries did not prevail against me.

“But now that may be said to this country which the prophet spake unto the Gentiles: Sing, O barren ! thou that didst not bear ; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail

with child ; for more are the children of the desolate⁽ⁿ⁾ than of the married wife, saith the Lord. (n)

“How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob! and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river-side, as the trees of lign-aloes, which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar-trees beside the waters. (o)

“Now the borders of the church are much enlarged, the number of believers wonderfully increased, and, blessed be God, every quarter and corner of the country is now filled with the sweet savour of the Gospel.

“O how it doth refresh my spirit, and rejoice my soul, to see or to think upon their sweet faces, standing before the Lord in the day of assembly, as an army in holy beauty !

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, fear none of those things which you shall suffer. Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong, be ye stedfast also, and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

With such like comfortable expressions did he encourage and stir up the minds of professors who visited him.

From this it is evident that Mr. Bruen was constant in the profession and practice of true religion. He was never unsettled in his course, nor diverted

from it ; no, not by the strongest oppositions. His constancy, as was the Temple by those two special pillars, Boaz and Jachin,* was supported by his confidence and patience.

This will further appear by noticing the last passages of his life.

Being grown very feeble and weak, much like a dying lamp, the oil wasting, and the light waning dim, he yet breathed out savory words of grace and peace, joy and comfort, which might be compared to the breaking open of a box of sweet odours, that refreshed all who came near it.

About the 15th of January, his strength was greatly abated, and his weakness much increased, by reason of a sore stoppage in his breast and throat, which prevented him from taking even a spoonful of syrup, or any kind of refreshment whatever.

About this time a worthy Knight, his cousin, whom he greatly loved, for his fidelity, and his zeal towards God's house and people, came to see him. When he beheld Mr. Bruen in so much weakness, he could not refrain from tears, but wept over him abundantly ; on which he endeavoured to comfort his kinsman, thus : " Good Sir, weep not for me ; for there is no cause of weeping, but of much rejoicing in my behalf ; turn your tears into prayers, and let me enjoy that fruit of your love. Let them weep

* Boaz, i. e. In it is strength.—Jachin, i. e. He shall establish.

that have no hope but in this life only ; let them weep that have no portion in the Lord, no part in Jesus Christ ; but as for you and me, let us, in every state and condition, while we live, rejoice in the Lord together. You are on your way ; I am at my journey's end ; walk on as you have both begun, and for a long time continued, and the Lord will be with you, he will never fail you nor forsake you."

On the following day his son and heir came to see him ; to whom he gave wholesome instruction and gracious exhortations, praying for and blessing him and the rest of his children, and encouraging him to be constant in religion, and to uphold the worship of God both in the public assembly and in his family.

On the same day Mr. Langley and myself came to see him ; and here, what shall I say ?—my sorrow bleeds afresh ; I can now rather weep than write : mine eyes drop tears as my pen doth words, and my writing rejoiceth, as it were, to mingle itself with my weeping. But I will endeavour to refrain myself, and relate a few things which I saw and heard from him at that time.—As soon as he saw me, he seemed much comforted in his very soul, and in broken sentences spoke to this effect : "Oh brother Hinde, you are a welcome man unto me ! I am here, you see, the Lord's prisoner, cast on a bed of sickness, and in great affliction ; yet waiting on the mercies of my God for a comfortable release in

due season." And when he was asked as to the state of his faith and hope in Christ, whether his consolations abounded in the midst of his afflictions, he replied, "Yes, I thank God, they far exceed them. Yea, and what is more remarkable, the Lord of his mercy hath given me so strong an evidence of his love and favour in Christ, that I am not troubled in my conscience with doubts and fears, nor any other satanical molestations and temptations; but rest and wait in patience for the accomplishment of his mercies."

Hereupon, though we were sorrowful in his sorrow, yet were we joyful in his joy. Wishing not to trouble him with many words, we proposed to join in prayer with him. On which he seemed to rejoice in his spirit, and intimated that he much desired it; and raising himself in his bed, and lifting his hands to God in the heavens, he, as it were, reached after the petitions that were put up to God for him; and, joining in heart and spirit with him that prayed, he could not contain himself; but oftentimes, with a cheerful consent, said *Amen, Amen*, to the supplications which were made for his good and comfort in Jesus Christ.

After this Mr. L. spoke to him a few words of comfort, saying that he knew he would shortly be released from all sin and sorrow, from Satan, and the present evil world: to which he replied, "I know I shall, and be with Christ, which is best of

all : and now the messenger of death is upon me ;” referring to the hiccup, which had seized him. Mr. L. rejoined, “I hope, Sir, death is no fear or terror to you.” “No indeed,” said he ; “I thank God, it is my way to life ; and I am now called of God unto it.”

Thus he continued in great pain of body, but increasing in consolations, and enduring his sickness with admirable patience.

The same evening he desired me to call his family to prayer, and to perform the evening sacrifice in the great parlour, commanding that the little parlour door be set open, that he might hear, and join us in the worship of Almighty God.

I staid with him till the afternoon of the next day ; when necessity calling me home, I and my wife (his former wife’s own sister) came to take leave of him ; on which his soul seemed to melt within him ; indeed *our* hearts, as well as his, were full of grief, and our eyes full of tears ; so mingling together our tears and prayers, we commended each other to the grace of God. Then falling on his face, and kissing his cheek, we took our long leave of him.

The following day he was supposed to be dying by those that were near him, who asked his blessing, which he willingly expressed, by lifting his hands and heart to heaven for them, at the same time uttering some words which were not intelligible.

In the afternoon he overheard somebody speaking of blacks, on which he said, "I will have no blacks; I love not proud or pompous funerals; neither is there any cause for mourning, but rather of rejoicing in my particular."

After this he intreated a certain pious person to pray with him, which he did, very willingly, again and again, to his great satisfaction.

And now growing so weak, that he was scarcely able to speak, some who were about him requested that he would lift up his hand, if he wished them to pray for him? with which he readily complied, and was heard to say *Amen*.

Afterwards lifting up his hands, he uttered these words, with others to the like effect:

"The Lord is my portion, my help, and my trust: his son Jesus is my Saviour and Redeemer: *Amen*. Even so saith the Spirit unto *my* Spirit. Therefore come Lord Jesus, and kiss me with the kisses of thy mouth, and embrace me with the arms of thy love. Into thy hands I commend my Spirit. O come, now, and take me to thine own self. O come, Lord Jesus; come quickly: O come! O come! O come!"

Having so said, his spirits fainting and his speech failing, he lay quiet for a short time, and then meekly yielded up his precious soul into the hands of God his Father who gave it, and the arms of his Saviour who redeemed it with his precious blood, in the year 1625, aged sixty-five.

Thus finishing his course, Mr. Bruen's happy spirit sweetly passed through the gate of death into the mansions of everlasting life and peace.

All
GLORY,
THANKSGIVING,
AND
Praise,

Be unto our gracious GOD, in and through his Son JESUS CHRIST, for ever and ever.

Amen.

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